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Joaquin Miller's Poems

[in six volumes]

Volume Four

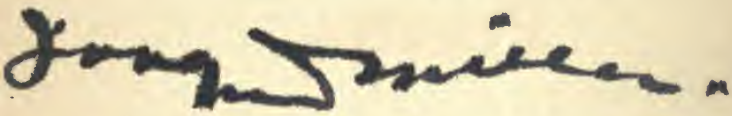
Songs of Italy and Others



San Francisco
The Whitaker & Ray Company
1909

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1909

TO
MY PARENTS
HULINGS
AND MARGARET WITT MILLER

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SONGS OF ITALY AND OTHERS

THE IDEAL AND THE REAL

And full these truths eternal
O'er the yearning spirit steal,
That the real is the ideal,
And the ideal is the real.

She was damn'd with the dower of beauty, she
Had gold in shower by shoulder and brow.
Her feet!—why, her two blessed feet, were so
small,
They could nest in this hand. How queenly, how
tall,
How gracious, how grand! She was all to me,—
My present, my past, my eternity!

She but lives in my dreams. I behold her now
By shoreless white waters that flow'd like a sea
At her feet where I sat; her lips pushed out
In brave, warm welcome of dimple and pout!
'Twas æons agone. By that river that ran
All fathomless, echoless, limitless, on,

And shoreless, and peopled with never a man,
We met, soul to soul. . . . No land; yet I
think
There were willows and lilies that lean'd to drink.
The stars they were seal'd and the moons were
gone.
The wide shining circles that girdled that world,
They were distant and dim. And an incense
curl'd
In vapory folds from that river that ran
All shoreless, with never the presence of man.

How sensuous the night; how soft was the sound
Of her voice on the night! How warm was her breath
In that world that had never yet tasted of death
Or forbidden sweet fruit! . . . In that far profound.

We were camped on the edges of godland. We
Were the people of Saturn. The watery fields,
The wide-wing'd, dolorous birds of the sea,
They acknowledged but us. Our brave battle shields
Were my naked white palms; our food it was love.
Our roof was the fresco of gold belts above.

How turn'd she to me where that wide river ran,
With its lilies and willows and watery weeds,
And heeded as only a true love heeds! . . .
How tender she was, and how timid she was!
But a black, hoofed beast, with the head of a man,
Stole down where she sat at my side, and began
To puff his tan cheeks, then to play, then to pause,
With his double-reed pipe; then to play and to play
As never played man since the world began,
And never shall play till the judgment day.

How he puff'd! how he play'd! Then down the dim shore,
This half-devil man, all hairy and black,

Did dance with his hoofs in the sand, laughing back
As his song died away. . . . She turned never more
Unto me after that. She arose and she pass'd
Right on from my sight. Then I followed as fast
As true love can follow. But ever before
Like a spirit she fled. How vain and how far
Did I follow my beauty, red belt or white star!
Through foamy white sea, unto fruit-laden shore.

How long did I follow! My pent soul of fire
It did feed on itself. I fasted, I cried;
Was tempted by many. Yet still I denied
The touch of all things, and kept my desire . . .
I stood by the lion of St. Mark in that hour
Of Venice when gold of the sunset is roll'd
From cloud to cathedral, from turret to tower,
In matchless, magnificent garments of gold;
Then I knew she was near; yet I had not known
Her form or her face since the stars were sown.

We two had been parted—God pity us!—when
This world was unnamed and all heaven was dim;
We two had been parted far back on the rim
And the outermost border of heaven's red bars;
We two had been parted ere the meeting of men,
Or God had set compass on spaces as yet;
We two had been parted ere God had once set
His finger to spinning the purple with stars,—
And now at the last in the sea and fret
Of the sun of Venice, we two had met.

Where the lion of Venice, with brows a-frown,
With tossed mane tumbled, and teeth in air,
Looks out in his watch o'er the watery town,
With paw half lifted, with claw half bare,
By the blue Adriatic, at her bath in the sea,—
I saw her. I knew her, but she knew not me.
I had found her at last! Why I, I had sail'd
The antipodes through, had sought, and had hail'd
All flags; I had climbed where the storm clouds curl'd,
And call'd o'er the awful arch'd dome of the world.

I saw her one moment, then fell back abash'd,
And fill'd to the throat. . . . Then I turn'd me once more,
Thanking God in my soul, while the level sun flashed
Happy halos about her. . . . Her breast!—why, her breast
Was white as twin pillows that lure you to rest.
Her sloping limbs moved like to melodies told,
As she rose from the sea, and threw back the gold
Of her glorious hair, and set face to the shore. . . .
I knew her! I knew her, though we had not met
Since the red stars sang to the sun's first set!

How long I had sought her! I had hunger'd, nor ate
Of any sweet fruits. I had followed not one
Of all the fair glories grown under the sun.

I had sought only her, believing that she
Had come upon earth, and stood waiting for me
Somewhere by my way. But the pathways of Fate
They had led otherwhere; the round world round,
The far North seas and the near profound
Had fail'd me for aye. Now I stood by that sea
Where she bathed in her beauty, . . . God, I and she!

I spake not, but caught in my breath; I did raise
My face to fair heaven to give God praise
That at last, ere the ending of Time, we had met,
Had touched upon earth at the same sweet place. . . .
Yea, we never had met since creation at all;
Never, since ages ere Adam's fall,
Had we two met in that hunger and fret
Where two should be one; but had wander'd through space;
Through space and through spheres, as some bird that hard fate
Gives a thousand glad Springs but never one mate.

Was it well with my love? Was she true? Was she brave
With virtue's own valor? Was she waiting for me?
Oh, how fared my love? Had she home? had she bread?
Had she known but the touch of the warm-temper'd wave?

Was she born to this world with a crown on her
head,
Or born, like myself, but a dreamer in-
stead? . . .
So long it had been! So long! Why, the sea—
That wrinkled and surly, old, time-temper'd
slave—
Had been born, had his revels, grown wrinkled
and hoar
Since I last saw my love on that uttermost shore.

Oh, how fared my love? Once I lifted my
face,
And I shook back my hair and look'd out on the
sea;
I press'd my hot palms as I stood in my place,
And I cried, "Oh, I come like a king to your
side
Though all hell intervene!" . . . "Hist! she
may be a bride,
A mother at peace, with sweet babes at her knee!
A babe at her breast and a spouse at her side!—
Had I wander'd too long, and had Destiny
Sat mortal between us?" I buried my face
In my hands, and I moan'd as I stood in my place.

'Twas her year to be young. She was tall, she
was fair—
Was she pure as the snow on the Alps over there?
'Twas her year to be young. She was queenly
and tall;
And I felt she was true, as I lifted my face
And saw her press down her rich robe to its
place,

With a hand white and small as a babe's with a doll.
And her feet!—why, her feet in the white shining sand
Were so small, 'twas a wonder the maiden could stand.
Then she push'd back her hair with a round hand that shone
And flash'd in the light with a white starry stone.

Then my love she is rich! My love she is fair!
Is she pure as the snow on the Alps over there?
She is gorgeous with wealth! "Thank God, she has bread,"
I said to myself. Then I humbled my head
In gratitude deep. Then I question'd me where
Was her palace, her parents? What name did she bear?
What mortal on earth came nearest her heart?
Who touch'd the small hand till it thrilled to a smart?
'Twas her year to be young. She was rich, she was fair—
Was she pure as the snow on the Alps over there?

Then she loosed her rich robe that was blue like the sea,
And silken and soft as a baby's new born.
And my heart it leap'd light as the sunlight at morn
At the sight of my love in her proud purity,
As she rose like a Naiad half-robed from the sea.
Then careless and calm as an empress can be

She loosed and let fall all the raiment of blue,
As she drew a white robe in a melody
Of moving white limbs, while between the two,
Like a rift in a cloud, shone her fair presence through.

Soon she turn'd, reach'd a hand; then a tall gondolier
Who had lean'd on his oar, like a long lifted spear
Shot sudden and swift and all silently,
And drew to her side as she turn'd from the tide.
It was odd, such a thing, and I counted it queer
That a princess like this, whether virgin or bride,
Should abide thus apart as she bathed in the sea;
And I chafed and I chafed, and so unsatisfied,
That I flutter'd the doves that were perch'd close about,
As I strode up and down in dismay and in doubt.

Swift she stept in the boat on the borders of night
As an angel might step on that far wonder land
Of eternal sweet life, which men mis-name Death.
Quick I called me a craft, and I caught at my breath
As she sat in the boat, and her white baby hand
Held vestments of gold to her throat, snowy white.
Then her gondola shot,—shot sharp for the shore:
There was never the sound of a song or of oar,
But the doves hurried home in white clouds to Saint Mark,
Where the brass horses plunge their high manes in the dark.

Then I cried: "Follow fast! Follow fast!
Follow fast!
Aye! thrice double fare, if you follow her true
To her own palace door!" There was plashing
of oar
And rattle of rowlock. . . . I sat peering
through,
Looking far in the dark, peering out as we
passed
With my soul all alert, bending down, leaning
low.
But only the oaths of the fisherman's crew
When we jostled them sharp as we sudden shot
through
The watery town. Then a deep, distant roar—
The rattle of rowlock; the rush of the oar.

The rattle of rowlock, the rush of the sea . . .
Swift wind like a sword at the throat of us all!
I lifted my face, and far, fitfully
The heavens breathed lightning; did lift and let
fall
As if angels were parting God's curtains. Then
deep
And indolent-like, and as if half asleep,
As if half made angry to move at all,
The thunder moved. It confronted me.
It stood like an avalanche poised on a hill,
I saw its black brows. I heard it stand still.

The troubled sea throbb'd as if rack'd with
pain.
Then the black clouds arose and suddenly rode,
As a fiery, fierce stallion that knows no rein
Right into the town. Then the thunder strode

As a giant striding from star to red star,
Then turn'd upon earth and frantically came,
Shaking the hollow heaven. And far
And near red lightning in ribbon and skein
Did seam and furrow the cloud with flame,
And write on black heaven Jehovah's name.

Then lightnings came weaving like shuttle-
cocks,
Weaving red robes of black clouds for death.
And frightened doves fluttered them home in
flocks,
And mantled men hied them with gather'd breath.
Black gondolas scattered as never before,
And drew like crocodiles up on the shore;
And vessels at sea stood further at sea,
And seamen haul'd with a bended knee,
And canvas came down to left and to right,
Till ships stood stripp'd as if stripp'd for fight!

Then an oath. Then a prayer. Then a gust,
with rents
Through the yellow-sail'd fishers. Then sud-
denly
Came sharp fork'd fire! Then again thunder fell
Like the great first gun. Ah, then there was
rout
Of ships like the breaking of regiments,
And shouts as if hurled from an upper hell.

Then tempest! It lifted, it spun us about,
Then shot us ahead through the hills of the sea
As a great steel arrow shot shoreward in wars—
Then the storm split open till I saw the blown
stars.

On! on! through the foam! through the storm!
through the town!
She was gone! She was lost in that wilderness
Of leprous white palaces. . . . Black distress!
I stood in my gondola. All up and all down
We pushed through the surge of the salt-flood street
Above and below. . . . 'Twas only the beat
Of the sea's sad heart. . . . I leaned, listened; I sat . . .
'Twas only the water-rat; nothing but that;
Not even the sea-bird screaming distress,
As she lost her way in that wilderness.

I listen'd all night. I caught at each sound;
I clutch'd and I caught as a man that drown'd—
Only the sullen, low growl of the sea
Far out the flood-street at the edge of the ships;
Only the billow slow licking his lips,
A dog that lay crouching there watching for me,—
Growling and showing white teeth all the night;
Only a dog, and as ready to bite;
Only the waves with their salt-flood tears
Fretting white stones of a thousand years.

And then a white dome in the loftiness
Of cornice and cross and of glittering spire
That thrust to heaven and held the fire
Of the thunder still; the bird's distress
As he struck his wings in that wilderness,
On marbles that speak, and thrill, and inspire,—
The night below and the night above;
The water-rat building, the sea-lost dove;

That one lost, dolorous, lone bird's call,
The water-rat building,—but that was all.

Silently, slowly, still up and still down,
We row'd and we row'd for many an hour,
By beetling palace and toppling tower,
In the darks and the deeps of the watery town.
Only the water-rat building by stealth,
Only the lone bird astray in his flight
That struck white wings in the clouds of night,
On spires that sprang from Queen Adria's wealth;
Only one sea dove, one lost white dove:
The blackness below, the blackness above!

Then, pushing the darkness from pillar to post,
The morning came sullen and gray like a ghost
Slow up the canal. I lean'd from the prow,
And listen'd. Not even that dove in distress
Crying its way through the wilderness;
Not even the stealthy old water-rat now,
Only the bell in the fisherman's tower,
Slow tolling at sea and telling the hour,
To kneel to their sweet Santa Barbara
For tawny fishers at sea, and to pray.

* * * * * *

High over my head, carved cornice, quaint spire.
And ancient built palaces knock'd their gray brows
Together and frown'd. Then slow-creeping scows
Scraped the walls on each side. Above me the fire

Of a sudden-born morning came flaming in bars;
While up through the chasm I could count the stars.
Oh, pity! Such ruin! The dank smell of death
Crept up the canal: I could scarce take my breath!
'Twas the fit place for pirates, for women who keep
Contagion of body and soul where they sleep. . . .

God's pity! A white hand now beckoned me
From an old mouldy door, almost in my reach.
I sprang to the sill as one wrecked to a beach;
I sprang with wide arms: it was she! it was she! . . .
And in such a damn'd place! And what was her trade?
To think I had follow'd so faithful, so far
From eternity's brink, from star to white star,
To find her, to find her, nor wife nor sweet maid!
To find her a shameless poor creature of shame,
A nameless, lost body, men hardly dared name.

All alone in her shame, on that damp dismal floor
She stood to entice me. . . . I bow'd me before
All-conquering beauty. I call'd her my Queen!
I told her my love as I proudly had told
My love had I found her as pure as pure gold.
I reach'd her my hands, as fearless, as clean,
As man fronting cannon. I cried, "Hasten forth
To the sun! There are lands to the south, to the north,

Anywhere where you will. Dash the shame from
your brow;
Come with me, for ever; and come with me
now!"

Why, I'd have turn'd pirate for her, would
have seen
Ships burn'd from the seas, like to stubble from
field.
Would I turn from her now? Why should I
now yield,
When she needed me most? Had I found her a
queen,
And beloved by the world,—why, what had I
done?
I had woo'd, and had woo'd, and had woo'd till
I won!
Then, if I had loved her with gold and fair fame,
Would not I now love her, and love her the
same?
My soul hath a pride. I would tear out my heart
And cast it to dogs, could it play a dog's part!

"Don't you know me, my bride of the wide
world of yore?
Why, don't you remember the white milky-way
Of stars, that we traversed the æons be-
fore? . . .
We were counting the colors, we were naming
the seas
Of the vaster ones. You remember the trees
That swayed in the cloudy white heavens, and
bore

Bright crystals of sweets, and the sweet manna-dew?
Why, you smile as you weep, you remember, and you,
You know me! You know me! You know me! Yea,
You know me as if 'twere but yesterday!

I told her all things. Her brow took a frown;
Her grand Titan beauty, so tall, so serene,
The one perfect woman, mine own idol queen—
Her proud swelling bosom, it broke up and down
As she spake, and she shook in her soul as she said,
With her small hands held to her bent, aching head:
"Go back to the world! Go back, and alone
Till kind Death comes and makes white as his own."
I said: "I will wait! I will wait in the pass
Of death, until Time he shall break his glass."

Then I cried, "Yea, here where the gods did love,
Where the white Europa was won,—she rode
Her milk-white bull through these same warm seas,—
Yea, here in the land where huge Hercules,
With the lion's heart and the heart of the dove,
Did walk in his naked great strength, and strode
In the sensuous air with his lion's skin
Flapping and fretting his knotted thews;
Where Theseus did wander, and Jason cruise,—
Yea, here let the life of all lives begin.

"Yea! Here where the Orient balms breathe life,
Where heaven is kindest, where all God's blue
Seems a great gate open'd to welcome you,
Come, rise and go forth, my empress, my wife."
Then spake her great soul, so grander far
Than I had believed on that outermost star;
And she put by her tears, and calmly she said,
With hands still held to her bended head:
"I will go through the doors of death and wait
For you on the innermost side death's gate.

"Thank God that this life is but a day's span,
But a wayside inn for weary, worn man—
A night and a day; and, tomorrow, the spell
Of darkness is broken. Now, darling, farewell!"
I caught at her robe as one ready to die—
"Nay, touch not the hem of my robe—it is red
With sins that your cruel sex heap'd on my head!
Now turn you, yes, turn! But remember how I
Wait weeping, in sackcloth, the while I wait
Inside death's door, and watch at the gate."

I cried yet again, how I cried, how I cried,
Reaching face, reaching hands as a drowning man might.
She drew herself back, put my two hands aside,
Half turned as she spoke, as one turned to the night:
Speaking low, speaking soft as a wind through the wall
Of a ruin where mold and night masters all;

"I shall live my day, live patient on through
The life that man hath compelled me to,

Then turn to my mother, sweet earth, and pray
She keep me pure to the Judgment Day!
I shall sit and wait as you used to do,
Will wait the next life, through the whole life
through.
I shall sit all alone, I shall wait alway;
I shall wait inside of the gate for you,
Waiting, and counting the days as I wait;
Yea, wait as that beggar that sat by the gate
Of Jerusalem, waiting the Judgment Day."



A DOVE OF ST. MARK

O terrible lion of tame Saint Mark!
Tamed old lion with the tumbled mane
Tossed to the clouds and lost in the dark,
With teeth in the air and tail-whipp'd back,
Foot on the Bible as if thy track
Led thee the lord of the desert again
Say, what of thy watch o'er the watery town?
Say, what of the worlds walking up and down?

O silent old monarch that tops Saint Mark,
That sat thy throne for a thousand years,
That lorded the deep that defied all men,—
Lo! I see visions at sea in the dark;
And I see something that shines like tears,
And I hear something that sounds like sighs,
And I hear something that seems as when
A great soul suffers and sinks and dies.

The high-born, beautiful snow came down,
Silent and soft as the terrible feet
Of time on the mosses of ruins. Sweet
Was the Christmas time in the watery town.
'Twas full flood carnival swell'd the sea
Of Venice that night, and canal and quay
Were alive with humanity. Man and maid,
Glad in mad revel and masquerade,
Moved through the feathery snow in the night,
And shook black locks as they laugh'd outright.

From Santa Maggiore, and to and fro,
And ugly and black as if devils cast out,
Black streaks through the night of such soft, white snow,

The steel-prow'd gondolas paddled about;
There was only the sound of the long oars dip,
As the low moon sail'd up the sea like a ship
In a misty morn. High the low moon rose,
Rose veil'd and vast, through the feathery snows,
As a minstrel stept silent and sad from his boat,
His worn cloak clutched in his hand to his throat.

Low under the lion that guards St. Mark,
Down under wide wings on the edge of the sea
In the dim of the lamps, on the rim of the dark,
Alone and sad in the salt-flood town,
Silent and sad and all sullenly,
He sat by the column where the crocodile
Keeps watch o'er the wave, far mile upon mile. . . .
Like a signal light through the night let down,
Then a far star fell through the dim profound—
A jewel that slipp'd God's hand to the ground.

The storm had blown over! Now up and then down,
Alone and in couples, sweet women did pass,
Silent and dreamy, as if seen in a glass,
Half mask'd to the eyes, in their Adrian town.
Such women! It breaks one's heart to think.
Water! and never one drop to drink!
What types of Titian! What glory of hair!
How tall as the sisters of Saul! How fair!
Sweet flowers of flesh, and all blossoming,
As if 'twere in Eden, and in Eden's spring.

"They are talking aloud with eloquent eyes,
Yet passing me by with never one word.
O pouting sweet lips, do you know there are lies

That are told with the eyes, and never once heard
Above a heart's beat when the soul is stirr'd?
It is time to fly home, O doves of St. Mark!
Take boughs of the olive; bear these to your ark,
And rest and be glad, for the seas and the skies
Of Venice are fair. . . . What! wouldn't go home?
What! drifting, and drifting as the soil'd sea-foam?

"And who then are you? You, masked and so fair?
Your half seen face is a rose full blown,
Down under your black and abundant hair? . . .
A child of the street, and unloved and alone!
Unloved; and alone? . . . There is something then
Between us two that is not unlike! . . .
The strength and the purposes of men
Fall broken idols. We aim and strike
With high-born zeal and with proud intent.
Yet let life turn on some accident. . . .

"Nay, I'll not preach. Time's lessons pass
Like twilight's swallows. They chirp in their flight,
And who takes heed of the wasting glass?
Night follows day, and day follows night,
And no thing rises on earth but to fall
Like leaves, with their lessons most sad and fit.
They are spread like a volume each year to all;
Yet men or women learn naught of it,
Or after it all but a weariness
Of soul and body and untold distress.

"Yea, sit, lorn child, by my side, and we,
We will talk of the world. Nay, let my hand
Fall kindly to yours, and so, let your face
Fall fair to my shoulder, and you shall be
My dream of sweet Italy. Here in this place,
Alone in the crowds of this old careless land,
I shall shelter your form till the morn and then—
Why, I shall return to the world and to men,
And you, not stain'd for one strange, kind word
And my three last francs, for a lorn night bird.

"Fear nothing from me, nay, never once fear.
The day, my darling, comes after the night.
The nights they were made to show the light
Of the stars in heaven, though the storms be
near. . . .
Do you see that figure of Fortune up there,
That tops the Dogana with toe a-tip
Of the great gold ball? Her scroll is a-trip
To the turning winds. She is light as the air.
Her foot is set upon plenty's horn,
Her fair face set to the coming morn.

"Well, trust we to Fortune. . . . Bread
on the wave
Turns ever ashore to the hand that gave.
What am I? A poet—a lover of all
That is lovely to see. Nay, naught shall be-
fall. . . .
Yes, I am a failure. I plot and I plan,
Give splendid advice to my fellow-man,
Yet ever fall short of achievement. . . . Ah
me!
In my lorn life's early, sad afternoon,
Say, what have I left but a rhyme or a rune?

An empty frail hand for some soul at sea,
Some fair, forbidden, sweet fruit to choose,
That 'twere sin to touch, and—sin to refuse?

"What! I go drifting with you, girl, to-night?
To sit at your side and to call you love?
Well, that were a fancy! To feed a dove,
A poor soil'd dove of this dear Saint Mark,
Too frighten'd to rest and too weary for flight...
Aye, just three francs, my fortune. There! He
Who feeds the sparrows for this will feed me.
Now here 'neath the lion, alone in the dark,
And side by side let us sit, poor dear,
Breathing the beauty as an atmosphere....

"We will talk of your loves, I write tales of love...
What! Cannot read? Why, you never heard then
Of your Desdemona, nor the daring men
Who died for her love? My poor white dove,
There's a story of Shylock would drive you wild.
What! Never have heard of these stories, my child?
Of Tasso, of Petrarch? Not the Bridge of Sighs?
Not the tale of Ferrara? Not the thousand whys
That your Venice was ever adored above
All other fair lands for her stories of love?

"What then about Shylock? 'Twas gold. Yes—dead.
The lady? 'Twas love....Why, yes; she too
Is dead. And Byron? 'Twas fame. Ah, true...
Tasso and Petrarch? All died, just the same...

Yea, so endeth all, as you truly have said,
And you, poor girl, are too wise; and you,
Too sudden and swift in your hard, ugly youth,
Have stumbled face fronting an obstinate truth.
For whether for love, for gold, or for fame,
They but lived their day, and they died the same.

But let's talk not of death? Of death or the life
That comes after death? 'Tis beyond your reach,
And this too much thought has a sense of strife....
Ah, true; I promised you not to preach....
My maid of Venice, or maid unmade,
Hold close your few francs and be not afraid.
What! Say you are hungry? Well, let us dine
Till the near morn comes on the silver shine
Of the lamp-lit sea. At the dawn of day,
My sad child-woman, you can go your way.

"What! You have a palace? I know your town;
Know every nook of it, left and right,
As well as yourself. Why, far up and down
Your salt flood streets, lo, many a night
I have row'd and have roved in my lorn despair
Of love upon earth, and I know well there
Is no such palace. What! and you dare
To look in my face and to lie outright,
To lift your face, and to frown me down?
There is no such palace in that part of the town!

"You would woo me away to your rickety boat!
You would pick my pockets! You would cut my throat,

With help of your pirates! Then throw me out
Loaded with stones to sink me down,
Down into the filth and the dregs of your town!
Why, that is your damnable aim, no doubt!
And, my plaintive voiced child, you seem too fair,
Too fair, for even a thought like that;
Too fair for ever such sin to dare—
Ay, even the tempter to whisper at.

"Now, there is such a thing as being true,
True, even in villainy. Listen to me:
Black-skinn'd women and low-brow'd men,
And desperate robbers and thieves; and then,
Why, there are the pirates!.....Ay, pirates
reform'd—
Pirates reform'd and unreform'd;
Pirates for me girl, friends for you,—
And these are your neighbors. And so you see
That I know your town, your neighbors; and I—
Well, pardon me, dear—but I know you lie.

"Tut, tut, my beauty! What trickery now?
Why, tears through your hair on my hand like
rain!
Come! look in my face: laugh, lie again
With your wonderful eyes. Lift up your brow,
Laugh in the face of the world, and lie!
Now, come! This lying is no new thing.
The wearers of laces know well how to lie,
As well, ay, better, than you or I....
But they lie for fortune, for fame: instead,
You, child of the street, only lie for your bread.

...."Some sounds blow in from the distant land.
The bells strike sharp, and as out of tune,
Some sudden, short notes. To the east and afar,
And up from the sea, there is lifting a star
As large, my beautiful child, and as white
And as lovely to see as some lady's white hand.
The people have melted away with the night,
And not one gondola frets the lagoon.
See! Away to the mountain, the face of morn.
Hear! Away to the sea—'tis the fisherman's horn.

"'Tis morn in Venice! My child, adieu!
Arise, sad sister, and go your way;
And as for myself, why, much like you,
I shall sell the story to who will pay
And dares to reckon it true and meet.
Yea, each of us traders, poor child of pain;
For each must barter for bread to eat
In a world of trade and an age of gain;
With just this difference, waif of the street,
You sell your body, I sell my brain.

"Poor lost little vessel, with never a keel.
Saint Marks, what a wreck! Lo, here you reel,
With never a soul to advise or to care;
All cover'd with sin to the brows and hair,
You lie like a seaweed, well a-strand;
Blown like the sea-kelp hard on the shale,
A half-drown'd body, with never a hand
Reach'd out to help where you falter and fail:
Left stranded alone to starve and to die,
Or to sell your body to who may buy.

"My sister of sin, I will kiss you! Yea,
I will fold you, hold you close to my breast;
And here as you rest in your first fair rest,
As night is push'd back from the face of day,
I will push your heavy, dark heaven of hair
Well back from your brow, and kiss you where
Your ruffian, bearded, black men of crime
Have stung you and stain'd you a thousand time;
I will call you my sister, sweet child, and keep
You close to my heart, lest you wake but to weep.

"I will tenderly kiss you, and I shall not be
Ashamed, nor yet stain'd in the least, sweet dove,—
I will tenderly kiss, with the kiss of Love,
And of Faith, and of Hope, and of Charity.
Nay, I shall be purer and be better then;
For, child of the street, you, living or dead,
Stain'd to the brows, are purer to me
Ten thousand times than the world of men,
Who reach you a hand but to lead you astray,—
But the dawn is upon us. There! go your way.

"And take great courage. Take courage and say,
Of this one Christmas when I am away,
Roving the world and forgetful of you,
That I found you as white as the snow and knew
You but needed a word to keep you true.
When you fall weary and so need rest,
Then find kind words hidden down in your breast;
And if rough men question you,—why, then say
That Madonna sent them. Then kneel and pray,
And pray for me, the worse of the two:

Then God will bless you, sweet child, and I
Shall be the better when I come to die.

"Yea, take great courage, it will be as bread;
Have faith, have faith while this day wears through.
Then rising refresh'd, try virtue instead;
Be stronger and better, poor, pitiful dear,
So prompt with a lie, so prompt with a tear,
For the hand grows stronger as the heart grows true....
Take courage, my child, for I promise you
We are judged by our chances of life and lot;
And your poor soul may yet pass through
The eye of the needle, where laces shall not.

"Sad dove of the dust, with tear-wet wings,
Homeless and lone as the dove from its ark,—
Do you reckon yon angel that tops St. Mark,
That tops the tower, that tops the town,
If he knew us two, if he knew all things,
Would say, or think, you are worse than I?
Do you reckon yon angel, now looking down,
Far down like a star, he hangs so high,
Could tell which one were the worse of us two?
Child of the street—it is not you!

"If we two were dead, and laid side by side
Right here on the pavement, this very day,
Here under the sun-flushed maiden sky,
Where the morn flows in like a rosy tide,
And the sweet Madonna that stands in the moon,
With her crown of stars, just across the lagoon,
Should come and should look upon you and I,—
Do you reckon, my child, that she would decide

As men do decide and as women do say,
That you are so dreadful, and turn away?

"If angels were sent to choose this day
Between us two as we rest here,
Here side by side in this storied place,—
If angels were sent to choose, I say,
This very moment the best of the two,
You, white with a hunger and stain'd with a tear,
Or I, the rover the wide world through,
Restless and stormy as any sea,—
Looking us two right straight in the face,
Child of the street, he would not choose me.

"The fresh sun is falling on turret and tower,
The far sun is flashing on spire and dome,
The marbles of Venice are bursting to flower,
The marbles of Venice are flower and foam:
Good night and good morn; I must leave you now.
There! bear my kiss on your pale, soft brow
Through earth to heaven: and when we shall meet
Beyond the darkness, poor waif of the street,
Why, then I shall know you, my sad, sweet dove;
Shall claim you, and kiss you, with the kiss of love."

COMO

The lakes lay bright as bits of broken moon
Just newly set within the cloven earth;
The ripen'd fields drew round a golden girth
Far up the steeps, and glittered in the noon;
And when the sun fell down, from leafy shore
Fond lovers stole in pairs to ply the oar;
The stars, as large as lilies, fleck'd the blue;
From out the Alps the moon came wheeling through
The rocky pass the great Napoleon knew.

A gala night it was,—the season's prime.
We rode from castled lake to festal town,
To fair Milan—my friend and I; rode down
By night, where grasses waved in rippled rhyme:
And so, what theme but love at such a time?
His proud lip curl'd the while with silent scorn
At thought of love; and then, as one forlorn,
He sigh'd; then bared his temples, dash'd with gray;
Then mock'd, as one outworn and well *blase*.

A gorgeous tiger lily, flaming red,—
So full of battle, of the trumpets blare,
Of old-time passion, uprear'd its head.
I gallop'd past. I lean'd. I clutch'd it there
From out the stormy grass. I held it high,
And cried: "Lo! this to-night shall deck her hair
Through all the dance. And mark! the man shall die
Who dares assault, for good or ill design,
The citadel where I shall set this sign."

O, she shone fairer than the summer star,
Or curl'd sweet moon in middle destiny;
More fair than sun-morn climbing up the sea,
Where all the loves of Adriana are.....
Who loves, who truly loves, will stand aloof:
The noisy tongue makes most unholy proof
Of shallow passion.....All the while afar
From out the dance I stood and watched my star,
My tiger lily borne, an oriflamme of war.

Adown the dance she moved with matchless grace.
The world—my world—moved with her. Suddenly
I question'd whom her cavalier might be?
'Twas he! His face was leaning to her face!
I clutch'd my blade; I sprang, I caught my breath,—
And so, stood leaning cold and still as death.
And they stood still. She blushed, then reach'd and tore
The lily as she pass'd, and down the floor
She strew'd its heart like jets of gushing gore...

'Twas he said heads, not hearts, were made to break:
He taught her this that night in splendid scorn.
I learn'd too well.....The dance was done, ere morn
We mounted—he and I—but no more spake....
And this for woman's love! My lily worn
In her dark hair in pride, to then be torn
And trampled on, for this bold stranger's sake!....
Two men rode silent back toward the lake;

Two men rode silent down—but only one
Rode up at morn to meet the rising sun.

The red-clad fishers row and creep
Below the crags as half asleep,
Nor ever make a single sound.
The walls are steep,
The waves are deep;
And if a dead man should be found
By these same fishers in their round,
Why, who shall say but he was drown'd?



SUNRISE IN VENICE

Night seems troubled and scarce asleep;
Her brows are gather'd as in broken rest.
A star in the east starts up from the deep!
'Tis morn, new-born, with a star on her breast,
White as my lilies that grow in the West!
Hist! men are passing me hurriedly.
I see the yellow, wide wings of a bark,
Sail silently over my morning star.
I see men move in the moving dark,
Tall and silent as columns are;
Great, sinewy men that are good to see,
With hair push'd back, and with open breasts;
Barefooted fishermen, seeking their boats,
Brown as walnuts, and hairy as goats,—
Brave old water-dogs, wed to the sea,
First to their labors and last to their rests.

Ships are moving. I hear a horn,—
Answers back, and again it calls.
'Tis the sentinel boats that watch the town
All night, as mounting her watery walls,
And watching for pirate or smuggler. Down
Over the sea, and reaching away,
And against the east, a soft light falls,
Silvery soft as the mist of morn,
And I catch a breath like the breath of day.

The east is blossoming! Yea, a rose,
Vast as the heavens, soft as a kiss,
Sweet as the presence of woman is,
Rises and reaches, and widens and grows
Large and luminous up from the sea,
And out of the sea as a blossoming tree.

Richer and richer, so higher and higher,
Deeper and deeper it takes its hue;
Brighter and brighter it reaches through
The space of heaven to the place of stars.
Then beams reach upward as arms, from the sea;
Then lances and arrows are aimed at me.
Then lances and spangles and spars and bars
Are broken and shiver'd and strown on the sea;
And around and about me tower and spire
Start from the billows like tongues of fire.

VALE! AMERICA

Let me rise and go forth. A far, dim spark
Illumes my path. The light of my day
Hath fled, and yet am I far away.
The bright, bent moon has dipp'd her horn
In the darkling sea. High up in the dark
The wrinkled old lion, he looks away
To the east, and impatient as if for morn....
I have gone the girdle of earth, and say,
What have I gain'd but a temple gray,
Two crow's feet, and a heart forlorn?

A star starts yonder like a soul afraid!
It falls like a thought through the great profound.
Fearfully swift and with never a sound,
It fades into nothing, as all things fade;
Yea, as all things fail. And where is the leaven
In the pride of a name or a proud man's nod?
Oh, tiresome, tiresome stairs to heaven!
Weary, oh, wearysome ways to God!
'Twere better to sit with the chin on the palm,
Slow tapping the sand, come storm, come calm.

I have lived from within and not from without;
I have drunk from a fount, have fed from a hand
That no man knows who lives upon land;
And yet my soul it is crying out.
I care not a pin for the praise of men;
But I hunger for love. I starve, I die,
Each day of my life. Ye pass me by
Each day, and laugh as ye pass; and when
Ye come, I start in my place as ye come,
And lean, and would speak,—but my lips are dumb.

Yon sliding stars and the changeful moon....
Let me rest on the plains of Lombardy for aye,
Or sit down by this Adrian Sea and die.
The days that do seem as some afternoon
They all are here. I am strong and true
To myself; can pluck and could plant anew
My heart, and grow tall; could come to be
Another being; lift bolder hand
And conquer. Yet ever will come to me
The thought that Italia is not my land.

Could I but return to my woods once more,
And dwell in their depths as I have dwelt,
Kneel in their mosses as I have knelt,
Sit where the cool white rivers run,
Away from the world and half hid from the sun,
Hear winds in the wood of my storm-torn shore,
To tread where only the red man trod,
To say no word, but listen to God!
Glad to the heart with listening,—
It seems to me that I then could sing,
And sing as never sung man before.

But deep-tangled woodland and wild waterfall,
O farewell for aye, till the Judgment Day!
I shall see you no more, O land of mine,
O half-aware land, like a child at play!
O voiceless and vast as the push'd-back skies!
No more, blue seas in the blest sunshine,
No more, black woods where the white peaks rise,
No more, bleak plains where the high winds fall,
Or the red man keeps or the shrill birds call!

I must find diversion with another kind:
There are roads on the land, broad roads on the sea;
Take ship and sail, and sail till I find
The love that I sought from eternity;
Run away from oneself, take ship and sail
The middle white seas; see turban'd men,—
Throw thought to the dogs for aye. And when
All seas are travel'd and all scenes fail,
Why, then this doubtful, sad gift of verse
May save me from death—or something worse.

My hand it is weary, and my harp unstrung;
And where is the good that I pipe or sing,
Fashion new notes, or shape any thing?
The songs of my rivers remain unsung
Henceforward for me....But a man shall arise
From the far, vast valleys of the Occident,
With hand on a harp of gold, and with eyes
That lift with glory and a proud intent;
Yet so gentle indeed, that his sad heartstrings
Shall thrill to the heart of your heart as he sings.

Let the wind sing songs in the lake-side reeds,
Lo, I shall be less than the indolent wind!
Why should I sow, when I reap and bind
And gather in nothing but the thistle weeds?
It is best I abide, let what will befall;
To rest if I can, let time roll by:
Let others endeavor to learn, while I,
With naught to conceal, with much to regret,
Shall sit and endeavor, alone, to forget.

Shall I shape pipes from these seaside reeds,
And play for the children, that shout and call?

Lo! men they have mock'd me the whole year
through!
I shall sing no more. . . .I shall find in old creeds,
And in quaint old tongues, a world that is new;
And these, I will gather the sweets of them all.
And the old-time doctrines and the old-time signs,
I will taste of them all, as tasting old wines.

I will find new thought, as a new-found vein
Of rock-lock'd gold in my far, fair West.
I will rest and forget, will entreat to be blest;
Take up new thought and again grow young;
Yea, take a new world as one born again,
And never hear more mine own mother tongue;
Nor miss it. Why should I? I never once heard,
In my land's language, love's one sweet word.

Did I court fame, or the favor of man?
Make war upon creed, or strike hand with clan?
I sang my songs of the sounding trees,
As careless of name or of fame as the seas;
And these I sang for the love of these,
And the sad sweet solace they brought to me.
I but sang for myself, touch'd here, touch'd there,
As a strong-wing'd bird that flies anywhere.

. . . . How do I wander! And yet why not?
I once had a song, told a tale in rhyme;
Wrote books, indeed, in my proud young prime;
I aim'd at the heart like a musket ball;
I struck cursed folly like a cannon shot,—
And where is the glory or good of it all?
Yet these did I write for my land, but this
I write for myself,—and it is as it is.

Yea, storms have blown counter and shaken
me.
And yet was I fashion'd for strife, and strong
And daring of heart, and born to endure;
My soul sprang upward, my feet felt sure;
My faith was as wide as a wide-bough'd tree.
But there be limits; and a sense of wrong
Forever before you will make you less
A man, than a man at first would guess.

Good men can forgive—and, they say, forget...
Far less of the angel than Indian is set
In my fierce nature. And I look away
To a land that is dearer than this, and say,
"I shall remember, though you may forget.
Yea, I shall remember for aye and a day
The keen taunts thrown in a boy face, when
He cried unto God for the love of men."

Enough, ay and more than enough, of this!
I know that the sunshine must follow the rain;
And if this be the winter, why spring again
Must come in its season, full blossom'd with bliss.
I will lean to the storm, though the winds blow
strong....
Yea, the winds they have blown and have shaken
me—
As the winds blow songs through a shattered old
tree,
They have blown this broken and careless set
song.

They have sung this song, be it never bad;
Have blown upon me and play'd upon me,
Have broken the notes,—blown sad, blown glad;

Just as the winds blow fierce and free
A barren, a blighted, and a cursed fig tree.
And if I grow careless and heed no whit
Whether it please or what comes of it,
Why, talk to the winds, then, and not to me.

* * * * * * * *

The quest of love? 'Tis the quest of troubles;
'Tis the wind through the woods of the Oregon.
Sit down, sit down, for the world goes on
Precisely the same; and the rainbow bubbles
Of love, they gather, or break, or blow,
Whether you bother your brain or no;
And for all your troubles and all your tears,
'Twere just the same in a hundred years.

By the populous land, or the lonesome sea,
Lo! these were the gifts of the gods to men,—
Three miserable gifts, and only three:
To love, to forget, and to die—and then?
To love in peril, and bitter-sweet pain,
And then, forgotten, lie down and die:
One moment of sun, whole seasons of rain,
Then night is roll'd to the door of the sky.

To love? To sit at her feet and to weep;
To climb to her face, hide your face in her hair;
To nestle you there like a babe in its sleep,
And, too, like a babe, to believe—it stings there!
To love! 'Tis to suffer, "Lie close to my breast,
Like a fair ship in haven, O darling!" I cried.
"Your round arms outreaching to heaven for rest

Make signal to death."....Death came, and love
died.
To forget? To forget, mount horse and clutch
sword;
Take ship and make sail to the ice-prison'd seas,
Write books and preach lies; range lands; or go
hoard
A grave full of gold, and buy wines—and drink
lees:
Then die; and die cursing, and call it a prayer!
Is earth but a top—a boy-god's delight,
To be spun for his pleasure, while man's despair
Breaks out like a wail of the damn'd through the
night?

Sit down in the darkness and weep with me
On the edge of the world. Lo, love lies dead!
And the earth and the sky, and the sky and the
sea,
Seem shutting together as a book that is read.
Yet what have we learn'd? We laugh'd with
delight
In the morning at school, and kept toying with all
Time's silly playthings. Now wearied ere night,
We must cry for dark-mother, her cradle the pall.

'Twere better blow trumpets 'gainst love, keep
away
That traitorous urchin with fire or shower,
Than have him come near you for one little hour.
Take physic, consult with your doctor, as you
Would fight a contagion; carry all through
The populous day some drug that smells loud,
As you pass on your way, or make way through
the crowd.

Talk war, or carouse; only keep off the day
Of his coming, with every hard means in your way.

Blow smoke in the eyes of the world, and laugh
With the broad-chested men, as you loaf at your inn,
As you crowd to your inn from your saddle and quaff
Red wine from a horn; while your dogs at your feet,
Your slim spotted dogs, like the fawn, and as fleet,
Crouch patiently by and look up at your face,
As they wait for the call of the horn to the chase;
For you shall not suffer, and you shall not sin,
Until peace goes out just as love comes in.

Love horses and hounds, meet many good men—
Yea, men are most proper, and keep you from care.
There is strength in a horse. There is pride in his will;
It is sweet to look back as you climb the steep hill.
There is room. You have movement of limb; you have air,
Have the smell of the wood, of the grasses; and then
What comfort to rest, as you lie thrown full length
All night and alone, with your fists full of strength!

Go away, go away with your bitter-sweet pain
Of love; for love is the story of troubles,
Of troubles and love, that travel together
The round world round. Behold the bubbles
Of love! Then troubles and turbulent weather.
Why, man had all Eden! Then love, then Cain!

* I do not like this bit of impatience, nor do I expect any one else to like it and only preserve it here as a sort of landmark or journal in my journey through life. It is only an example of almost an entire book, written in Italy. I had, after a long struggle with myself, settled down in Italy to remain, as I believed, and as you can see was very miserable, and wrote accordingly.



ROME

I

Some leveled hills, a wall, a dome
That lords its gold cross to the skies,
While at its base a beggar cries
For bread, and dies, and—this is Rome.

II

Yet Rome is Rome, and Rome she must
And shall remain beside her gates,
And tribute take of Kings and States,
Until the stars have fallen to dust.

III

Yea, Time on yon Campagnan plain
Has pitched in siege his battle-tents;
And round about her battlements
Has marched and trumpeted in vain.

IV

These skies are Rome! The very loam
Lifts up and speaks in Roman pride;
And Time, outfaced and still defied,
Sits by and wags his beard at Rome.

"POVERIS! POVERIS!"

"Feed my sheep."

Come, let us ponder; it is fit—
Born of the poor, born to the poor,
The poor of purse, the poor of wit,
Were first to find God's opened door—
Were first to climb the ladder round by round
That fell from heaven's door unto the ground.

God's poor came first, the very first!
God's poor were first to see, to hear,
To feel the light of heaven burst
Full on their faces. Far or near,
His poor were first to follow, first to fall!
What if at last His poor stand forth the first of all?

ATTILA'S THRONE, TORCELLO

I do recall some sad days spent
By borders of the Orient,
'Twould make a tale. It matters not.
I sought the loneliest seas; I sought
The solitude of ruins, and forgot
Mine own life and my littleness
Before this fair land's mute distress.

Slow sailing through the reedy isles,
Some sunny summer yesterdays,
I watched the storied yellow sail,
And lifted prow of steely mail
'Tis all that's left Torcello now,—
A pirate's yellow sail, a prow.

I touch'd Torcello. Once on land,
I took a sea-shell in my hand,
And blew like any trumpeter.
I felt the fig leaves lift and stir
On trees that reach from ruin'd wall
Above my head,—but that was all.
Back from the farther island shore
Came echoes trooping—nothing more.

By cattle paths grass-grown and worn,
Through marbled streets all stain'd and torn
By time and battle, lone I walk'd.
A bent old beggar, white as one
For better fruitage blossoming,
Came on. And as he came he talk'd
Unto himself; for there were none
In all his island, old and dim,
To answer back or question him.

I turn'd, retraced my steps once more.
The hot miasma steam'd and rose
In deadly vapor from the reeds
That grew from out the shallow shore,
Where peasants say the sea-horse feeds,
And Neptune shapes his horn and blows.

Yet here stood Adria once, and here
Attila came with sword and flame,
And set his throne of hollow'd stone
In her high mart. And it remains
Still lord o'er all. Where once the tears
Of mute petition fell, the rains
Of heaven fall. Lo! all alone
There lifts this massive empty throne.

I climb'd and sat that throne of stone
To contemplate, to dream, to reign —
Ay, reign above myself; to call
The people of the past again
Before me as I sat alone
In all my kingdom. There were kine
That browsed along the reedy brine,
And now and then a tusky boar
Would shake the high reeds of the shore,
A bird blow by,—but that was all.

I watch'd the lonesome sea-gull pass.
I did remember and forget, —
The past roll'd by; I lived alone.
I sat the shapely, chisell'd stone
That stands in tall, sweet grasses set;
Ay, girdle deep in long, strong grass,
And green alfalfa. Very fair
The heavens were, and still and blue,

For Nature knows no changes there.
The Alps of Venice, far away,
Like some half-risen late moon lay.

How sweet the grasses at my feet!
The smell of clover over-sweet.
I heard the hum of bees. The bloom
Of clover-tops and cherry-trees
Was being rifled by the bees,
And these were building in a tomb.
The fair alfalfa—such as has
Usurp'd the Occident, and grows
With all the sweetness of the rose
On Sacramento's sundown hills—
Is there, and that dead island fills
With fragrance. Yet the smell of death
Comes riding in on every breath.

That sad, sweet fragrance. It had sense,
And sound, and voice. It was a part
Of that which had possess'd my heart,
And would not of my will go hence,
'Twas Autumn's breath; sad as the kiss
Of some sweet worshipp'd woman is.

Some snails had climb'd the throne and writ
Their silver monograms on it
In unknown tongues. I sat thereon,
I dream'd until the day was gone;
I blew again my pearly shell,—
Blew long and strong, and loud and well;
I puff'd my cheeks, I blew as when
Horn'd satyrs piped and danced as men.

Some mouse-brown cows that fed within
Look'd up. A cowherd rose hard by,
My single subject, clad in skin,
Nor yet half-clad. I caught his eye, —
He stared at me, then turn'd and fled.
He frighten'd fled, and as he ran,
Like wild beast from the face of man,
Back o'er his shoulder threw his head.
He stopp'd, and then this subject true,
Mine only one in all the isle,
Turn'd round, and, with a fawning smile,
Came back and ask'd me for a *sou!*



VENICE

City at sea, thou art surely an ark,
Sea-blown and a-wreck in the rain and dark,
Where the white sea-caps are so toss'd and curl'd.
Thy sins they were many—and behold the flood!
And here and about us are beasts in stud.
Creatures and beasts that creep and go,
Enough, ay, and wicked enough I know,
To populate, or devour, a world.

O wrinkled old lion, looking down
With brazen frown upon mine and me,
From tower a-top of your watery town,
Old king of the desert, once king of the sea:
List! here is a lesson for thee to-day.
Proud and immovable monarch, I say,
Lo! here is a lesson to-day for thee,
Of the things that were and the things to be.

Dank palaces held by the populous sea
For the good dead men, all cover'd with shell,—
We will pay them a visit some day; and we,
We may come to love their old palaces well.
Bah! toppled old columns all tumbled across,
Toss'd in the waters that lift and fall,
Waving in waves long masses of moss,
Toppled old columns,—and that will be all.

I know you, lion of gray Saint Mark;
You flutter'd all seas beneath your wing.
Now, over the deep, and up in the dark,
High over the girdles of bright gaslight,
With wings in the air as if for flight,
And crouching as if about to spring

From top of your granite of Africa,—
Say, what shall be said of you some day?

What shall be said, O grim Saint Mark,
Savage old beast so cross'd and churl'd,
By the after-men from the under-world?
What shall be said as they search along
And sail these seas for some sign or spark
Of the old dead fires of the dear old days,
When men and story have gone their ways,
Or even your city and name from song?

Why, sullen old monarch of still'd Saint Mark,
Strange men of my West, wise-mouth'd and strong,
Will come some day and, gazing long
And mute with wonder, will say of thee:
"This is the Saint! High over the dark,
Foot on the Bible and great teeth bare,
Tail whipp'd back and teeth in the air—
Lo! this is the Saint, and none but he!"

A HAILSTORM IN VENICE

The hail like cannon-shot struck the sea
And churn'd it white as a creamy foam;
Then hail like battle-shot struck where we
Stood looking a-sea from a sea-girt home—
Came shooting askance as if shot at the head;
Then glass flew shiver'd and men fell down
And pray'd where they fell, and the gray old town
Lay riddled and helpless as if shot dead.

Then lightning right full in the eyes! and then
Fair women fell down flat on the face,
And pray'd their pitiful Mother with tears,
And pray'd black death as a hiding-place;
And good priests pray'd for the sea-bound men
As never good priests had pray'd for years....
Then God spake thunder! And then the rain!
The great, white, beautiful, high-born rain!

SANTA MARIA: TORCELLO

And yet again through the watery miles
Of reeds I row'd, till the desolate isles
Of the black-bead makers of Venice were not.
I touch'd where a single sharp tower is shot
To heaven, and torn by thunder and rent
As if it had been Time's battlement.
A city lies dead, and this great gravestone
Stands on its grave like a ghost alone.

Some cherry-trees grow here, and here
An old church, simple and severe
In ancient aspect, stands alone
Amid the ruin and decay, all grown
In moss and grasses. Old and quaint,
With antique cuts of martyr'd saint,
The gray church stands with stooping knees,
Defying the decay of seas.

Her pictured hell, with flames blown high,
In bright mosaics wrought and set
When man first knew the Nubian art;
Her bearded saints as black as jet;
Her quaint Madonna, dim with rain
And touch of pious lips of pain,
So touch'd my lonesome soul, that I
Gazed long, then came and gazed again,
And loved, and took her to my heart.

Nor monk in black, nor Capucin,
Nor priest of any creed was seen.
A sunbrown'd woman, old and tall,
And still as any shadow is,

Stole forth from out the mossy wall
With massive keys to show me this:
Came slowly forth, and, following,
Three birds—and all with drooping wing.

Three mute brown babes of hers; and
they—
Oh, they were beautiful as sleep,
Or death, below the troubled deep!
And on the pouting lips of these,
Red corals of the silent seas,
Sweet birds, the everlasting seal
Of silence that the God has set
On this dead island sits for aye.

I would forget, yet not forget
Their helpless eloquence. They creep
Somehow into my heart, and keep
One bleak, cold corner, jewel set.
They steal my better self away
To them, as little birds that day
Stole fruits from out the cherry-trees.

So helpless and so wholly still,
So sad, so wrapt in mute surprise,
That I did love, despite my will.
One little maid of ten—such eyes,
So large and lovely, so divine!
Such pouting lips, such pearly cheek!
Did lift her perfect eyes to mine,
Until our souls did touch and speak—
Stood by me all that perfect day,
Yet not one sweet word could she say.

She turn'd her melancholy eyes
So constant to my own, that I
Forgot the going clouds, the sky;
Found fellowship, took bread and wine:
And so her little soul and mine
Stood very near together there.
And oh, I found her very fair!
Yet not one soft word could she say:
What did she think of all that day?

IN A GONDOLA

'Twas night in Venice. Then down to the tide,
Where a tall and a shadowy gondolier
Lean'd on his oar, like a lifted spear;—
'Twas night in Venice; then side by side
We sat in his boat. Then oar a-trip
On the black boat's keel, then dip and dip,
These boatmen should build their boats more
wide,
For we were together, and side by side.

The sea it was level as seas of light,
As still as the light ere a hand was laid
To the making of lands, or the seas were made.
'Twas fond as a bride on her bridal night
When a great love swells in her soul like a sea,
And makes her but less than divinity.
'Twas night,—The soul of the day, I wis.
A woman's face hiding from her first kiss.

....Ah, how one wanders! Yet after it all,
To laugh at all lovers and to learn to scoff....
When you really have naught of account to say,
It is better, perhaps, to pull leaves by the way;
Watch the round moon rise, or the red stars fall;
And then, too, in Venice! dear, moth-eaten town;
One palace of pictures; great frescoes spill'd
down
Outside the walls from the fullness thereof:—

'Twas night in Venice. On o'er the tide—
These boats they are narrow as they can be,
These crafts they are narrow enough, and we,

To balance the boat, sat side by side—
Out under the arch of the Bridge of Sighs,
On under the arch of the star-sown skies;
We two were together on the Adrian Sea,—
The one fair woman of the world to me.

THE CAPUCIN OF ROME

Only a basket for fruits or bread
And the bits you divide with your dog, which you
Had left from your dinner. The round year through
He never once smiles. He bends his head
To the scorn of men. He gives the road
To the grave ass groaning beneath his load.
He is ever alone. Lo! never a hand
Is laid in his hand through the whole wide land,
Save when a man dies, and he shrives him home.
And that is the Capucin monk of Rome.

He coughs, he is hump'd, and he hobbles about
In sandals of wood. Then a hempen cord
Girdles his loathsome gown. Abhorr'd!
Ay, lonely, indeed, as a leper cast out.
One gown in three years! and—bah! how he smells!
He slept last night in his coffin of stone,
This monk that coughs, this skin and bone,
This living dead corpse from the damp, cold cells,—
Go ye where the Pincian, half-level'd down,
Slopes slow to the south. These men in brown
Have a monkery there, quaint, builded of stone;
And, living or dead, 'tis the brown men's home,—
These dead brown monks who are living in Rome!

You will hear wood sandals on the sanded floor;
A cough, then the lift of a latch, then the door

Groans open, and—horror! Four walls of stone
All gorgeous with flowers and frescoes of bone!
There are bones in the corners and bones on the
wall;
And he barks like a dog that watches his bone,
This monk in brown from his bed of stone—
He barks, and he coughs, and that is all.
At last he will cough as if up from his cell;
Then strut with considerable pride about,
And lead through his blossoms of bone, and smell
Their odors; then talk, as he points them out,
Of the virtues and deeds of the gents who wore
The respective bones but the year before.

Then he thaws at last, ere the bones are
through,
And talks right well as he turns them about
And stirs up a most unsavory smell;
Yea, talks of his brown dead brothers, till you
Wish them, as they are, no doubt, in—well,
A very deep well. . . .And that may be why,
As he shows you the door and bows good-by,
That he bows so low for a franc or two,
To shrive their souls and to get them out—
These bony brown men who have their home,
Dead or alive, in their cells at Rome.

What good does he do in the world? Ah!
well,
Now that is a puzzler. . . .But, listen! He prays.
His life is the fast of the forty days.
He seeks the despised; he divides the bread
That he begg'd on his knees, does this old shave-
head.

And then, when the thief and the beggar fell!
And then, when the terrible plague came down,
Christ! how we cried to these men in brown
When other men fled! Ah, who then was seen
Stand firm to the death like the Capucin?



SONGS OF THE HEBREW CHILDREN

"In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wild waste there still is a tree."

Though the many lights dwindle to one light,
There is help if the heavens have one."

"Change lays not her hand upon truth."

AT BETHLEHEM

With incense and myrrh and sweet spices,
 Frankincense and sacredest oil
In ivory, chased with devices
 Cut quaint and in serpentine coil;
Heads bared, and held down to the bosom;
 Brows massive with wisdom and bronzed;
Beards white as the white May in blossom;
 And borne to the breast and beyond,—
Came the Wise of the East, bending lowly
 On staffs, with their garments girt round
With girdles of hair, to the Holy
 Child Christ, in their sandals. The sound
Of song and thanksgiving ascended—
Deep night! Yet some shepherds afar
Heard a wail with the worshipping blended
 And they then knew the sign of the star.

"LA NOTTE"

Is it night? And sits night at your pillow?
 Sits darkness about you like death?
Rolls darkness above like a billow,
 As drowning men catch in their breath?

Is it night, and deep night of dark errors,
 Of crosses, of pitfalls and bars?
Then lift up your face from your terrors,
 For heaven alone holds the stars!

Lo! shaggy beard shepherds, the fastness—
 Lorn, desolate Syrian sod;
The darkness, the midnight, the vastness—
 That vast, solemn night bore a God!

The night brought us God; and the Savior
 Lay down in a cradle to rest;
A sweet cherub Babe in behavior,
 So that all baby-world might be blest.

IN PALESTINE

O Jebus! thou mother of prophets,
Of soldiers and heroes of song;
Let the crescent oppress thee and scoff its
Blind will, let the days do thee wrong;

But to me thou art sacred and splendid,
And to me thou art matchless and fair,
As the tawny sweet twilight, with blended
Sunlight and red stars in her hair.

Thy fair ships once came from sweet Cyprus,
And fair ships drew in from Cyrene,
With fruits and rich robes and sweet spices
For thee and thine, eminent queen;

And camels came in with the traces
Of white desert dust in their hair
As they kneel'd in the loud market places,
And Arabs with lances were there.

'Tis past, and the Bedouin pillows
His head where thy battlements fall,
And thy temples flash gold to the billows,
Never more over turreted wall.

'Tis past, and the green velvet mosses
Have grown by the sea, and now sore
Does the far billow mourn for his losses
Of lifted white ships to the shore.

Let the crescent uprise, let it flash on
Thy dust in the garden of death,

Thy chastened and passionless passion
Sunk down to the sound of a breath;

Yet you lived like a king on a throne and
You died like a queen of the south;
For you lifted the cup with your own hand
To your proud and your passionate mouth;

Like a splendid swift serpent surrounded
With fire and sword, in your side
You struck your hot fangs and confounded
Your foes; you struck deep, and so—died.

BEYOND JORDAN

And they came to Him, mothers of Judah,
 Dark eyed and in splendor of hair,
Bearing down over shoulders of beauty,
 And bosoms half hidden, half bare;

And they brought Him their babes and besought
 Him
 Half kneeling, with suppliant air,
To bless the brown cherubs they brought Him,
 With holy hands laid in their hair.

Then reaching His hands He said, lowly,
 "Of such is My Kingdom"; and then
Took the brown little babes in the holy
 White hands of the Savior of men;

Held them close to His heart and caress'd them,
 Put His face down to theirs as in prayer,
Put their hands to His neck, and so bless'd them
 With baby hands hid in His hair.

FAITH

There were whimsical turns of the waters,
 There were rhythmical talks of the sea,—
There were gather'd the darkest eyed daughters
 Of men, by the deep Galilee.

A blowing full sail, and a parting
 From multitudes, living in Him,
A trembling of lips, and tears starting
 From eyes that look'd downward and dim.

A mantle of night and a marching
 Of storms, and a sounding of seas,
Of furrows of foam and of arching
 Black billows; a bending of knees;

The rising of Christ—an entreating—
 Hands reach'd to the seas as He saith,
"Have Faith!" And all seas are repeating,
 "Have Faith! Have Faith! Have Faith!"

HOPE

What song is well sung not of sorrow?
 What triumph well won without pain?
What virtue shall be, and not borrow
 Bright luster from many a stain?

What birth has there been without travail?
 What battle well won without blood?
What good shall earth see without evil
 Ingarner'd as chaff with the good?

Lo! the cross set in rocks by the Roman,
 And nourish'd by blood of the Lamb,
And water'd by tears of the woman,
 Has flourish'd, has spread like a palm;

Has spread in the frosts, and far regions
 Of snows in the North, and South sands,
Where never the tramp of his legions
 Was heard, or reach'd forth his red hands.

Be thankful; the price and the payment,
 The birth, the privations and scorn,
The cross, and the parting of raiment,
 Are finish'd. The star brought us morn.

Look starward; stand far and unearthy,
 Free soul'd as a banner unfurl'd.
Be worthy, O brother, be worthy!
 For a God was the price of the world.

CHARITY

Her hands were clasped downward and doubled,
 Her head was held down and depress'd,
Her bosom, like white billows troubled,
 Fell fitful and rose in unrest;

Her robes were all dust and disorder'd
 Her glory of hair, and her brow,
Her face, that had lifted and lorded,
 Fell pallid and passionless now.

She heard not accusers that brought her
 In mockery hurried to Him,
Nor heeded, nor said, nor besought her
 With eyes lifted doubtful and dim.

All crush'd and stone-cast in behavior,
 She stood as a marble would stand,
Then the Savior bent down, and the Savior
 In silence wrote on in the sand.

What wrote He? How fondly one lingers
 And questions, what holy command
Fell down from the beautiful fingers
 Of Jesus, like gems in the sand.

O better the Scian uncherish'd
 Had died ere a note or device
Of battle was fashion'd, than perish'd
 This only line written by Christ.

He arose and look'd on the daughter
 Of Eve, like a delicate flower,

And he heard the revilers that brought her;
Men stormy, and strong as a tower;

And He said, "She has sinn'd; let the blameless
Come forward and cast the first stone!"
But they, they fled shamed and yet shameless;
And she, she stood white and alone.

Who now shall accuse and arraign us?
What man shall condemn and disown?
Since Christ has said only the stainless
Shall cast at his fellows a stone.

For what man can bare us his bosom,
And touch with his forefinger there,
And say, 'Tis as snow, as a blossom?
Beware of the stainless, beware!

O woman, born first to believe us;
Yea, also born first to forget;
Born first to betray and deceive us;
Yet first to repent and regret!

O first then in all that is human,
Yea! first where the Nazarene trod,
O woman! O beautiful woman!
Be then first in the kingdom of God!

A SONG FOR PEACE

I

As a tale that is told, as a vision,
 Forgive and forget; for I say
That the true shall endure the derision
 Of the false till the full of the day;

II

Ay, forgive as you would be forgiven;
 Ay, forget, lest the ill you have done
Be remember'd against you in heaven
 And all the days under the sun.

III

For who shall have bread without labor?
 And who shall have rest without price?
And who shall hold war with his neighbor
 With promise of peace with the Christ?

IV

The years may lay hand on fair heaven;
 May place and displace the red stars;
May stain them, as blood stains are driven
 At sunset in beautiful bars;

V

May shroud them in black till they fret us
 As clouds with their showers of tears;

May grind us to dust and forget us,
 May the years, O, the pitiless years!

VI

But the precepts of Christ are beyond them;
 The truths by the Nazarene taught,
With the tramp of the ages upon them,
 They endure as though ages were naught;

VII

The deserts may drink up the fountains,
 The forests give place to the plain,
The main may give place to the mountains,
 The mountains return to the main;

VIII

Mutations of worlds and mutations
 Of suns may take place, but the reign
Of Time, and the toils and vexations
 Bequeath them, no, never a stain.

IX

Go forth to the fields as one sowing,
 Sing songs and be glad as you go,
There are seeds that take root without showing,
 And bear some fruit whether or no.

X

And the sun shall shine sooner or later,
Though the midnight breaks ground on the morn,
Then appeal you to Christ, the Creator,
And to gray bearded Time, His first born.

TO RUSSIA

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?"—Bible.

Who tamed your lawless Tartar blood?
What David bearded in her den
The Russian bear in ages when
You strode your black, unbridled stud,
A skin-clad savage of your steppes?
Why, one who now sits low and weeps,
Why one who now wails out to you—
The Jew, the Jew, the homeless Jew.

Who girt the thews of your young prime
And bound your fierce divided force?
Why, who but Moses shaped your course
United down the grooves of time?
Your mightly millions all today
The hated, homeless Jew obey.
Who taught all poetry to you?
The Jew, the Jew, the hated Jew.

Who taught you tender Bible tales
Of honey-lands, of milk and wine?
Of happy, peaceful Palestine?
Of Jordan's holy harvest vales?
Who gave the patient Christ? I say,
Who gave your Christian creed? Yea, yea,
Who gave your very God to you?
Your Jew! Your Jew! Your hated Jew!

TO RACHEL IN RUSSIA

"To bring them unto a good land and a large; unto a land flowing with milk and honey."

O thou, whose patient, peaceful blood
Paints Sharon's roses on thy cheek,
And down thy breasts played hide and seek,
Six thousand years a stainless flood,
Rise up and set thy sad face hence.
Rise up and come where Freedom waits
Within these white, wide ocean gates
To give thee God's inheritance;
To bind they wounds in this despair;
To braid thy long, strong, loosened hair.

O Rachel, weeping where the flood
Of icy Volga grinds and flows
Against his banks of blood-red snows—
White banks made red with children's blood—
Lift up thy head, be comforted;
For, as thou didst on manna feed,
When Russia roamed a bear in deed,
And on her own foul essence fed,
So shalt thou flourish as a tree
When Russ and Cossack shall not be.

Then come where yellow harvests swell;
Forsake that savage land of snows;
Forget the brutal Russian's blows;
And come where Kings of Conscience dwell.
Oh come, Rebecca to the well!
The voice of Rachel shall be sweet!
The Gleaner rest safe at the feet

Of one who loves her; and the spell
Of Peace that blesses Paradise
Shall kiss thy large and lonely eyes.

Years later in Easton, Pa., I wrote and published "Olive Leaves," in line with what Brother advised, but have decided to preserve only the fragments that are here set down, "Songs of the Hebrew Children."

Jean Ingelow, London, had given a letter to a Boston publisher, who came to me there for my book in America, as I was more entirely a stranger in the Atlantic States than in Europe; and now returned I sat all summer at a bedside, editing the book. At last the revised edition for America was done. It came just in time. He took the book, still damp from the binders, said "It is a pretty book," and laid it down. He said some other things, sacred to us, and passed. Had he lived, with his better sense about all things, I surely should have done better, better in all ways. Death had broken in upon us cruelly, and I must go back to Oregon now. There was not time nor heart nor health to finish the Life of Christ; besides I had begun to see that the measure was monotonous. The greatest poem on earth probably is the Sermon on the Mount. I laid the few completed pages on my Brother's grave, and once more I was in Oregon.

O boy at peace upon the Delaware!
O brother mine, that fell in battle front
Of life, so braver, nobler far than I,
The wanderer who vexed all gentleness,
Receive this song; I have but this to give.
I may not rear the rich man's ghostly stone;
But you, through all my follies loving still
And trusting me . . . nay, I shall not forget.

A failing hand in mine, and fading eyes
That look'd in mine as from another land,
You said: "Some gentler things; a song for Peace.
'Mid all your songs for men one song for God."
And then the dark-brow'd mother, Death, bent down
Her face to yours, and you were born to Him.

THE ULTIMATE WEST

My Mountains still are free!
They hurl oppression back;
They keep the boon of liberty.

THE GOLD THAT GREW BY SHASTA TOWN

From Shasta town to Redding town
The ground is torn by miners dead;
The manzanita, rank and red,
Drops dusty berries up and down
Their grass-grown trails. Their silent mines
Are wrapped in chaparral and vines;
Yet one gray miner still sits down
'Twixt Redding and sweet Shasta town.

The quail pipes pleasantly. The hare
Leaps careless o'er the golden oat
That grows below the water moat;
The lizard basks in sunlight there.
The brown hawk swims the perfumed air
Unfrightened through the livelong day;
And now and then a curious bear
Comes shuffling down the ditch by night,
And leaves some wide, long tracks in clay
So human-like, so stealthy light,
Where one lone cabin still stoops down
'Twixt Redding and sweet Shasta town.

That great graveyard of hopes! of men
Who sought for hidden veins of gold;
Of young men suddenly grown old—
Of old men dead, despairing when
The gold was just within their hold!
That storied land, whereon the light
Of other days gleams faintly still;
Somelike the halo of a hill
That lifts above the falling night;
That warm, red, rich and human land,

That flesh-red soil, that warm red sand,
Where one gray miner still sits down!
'Twixt Redding and sweet Shasta town!

"I know the vein is here!" he said;
For twenty years, for thirty years!
While far away fell tears on tears
From wife and babe who mourned him dead.
No gold! No gold! And he grew old
And crept to toil with bended head
Amid a graveyard of his dead,
Still seeking for that vein of gold.

Then lo, came laughing down the years
A sweet grandchild! Between his tears
He laughed. He set her by the door
The while he toiled; his day's toil o'er
He held her chubby cheeks between
His hard palms, laughed; and laughing cried.
You should have seen, have heard and seen
His boyish joy, his stout old pride,
When toil was done and he sat down
At night, below sweet Shasta town!

At last his strength was gone. "No more!
I mine no more. I plant me now
A vine and fig-tree; worn and old,
I seek no more my vein of gold.
But, oh, I sigh to give it o'er;
These thirty years of toil! somehow
It seems so hard; but now, no more."

And so the old man set him down
To plant, by pleasant Shasta town.
And it was pleasant; piped the quail

The full year through. The chipmunk stole,
His whiskered nose and tossy tail
Full buried in the sugar-bowl.

And purple grapes and grapes of gold
Swung sweet as milk. While orange-trees
Grew brown with laden honey-bees.
Oh! it was pleasant up and down
That vine-set hill of Shasta town.

* * * * * *

And then that cloud-burst came! Ah, me!
That torn ditch there! The mellow land
Rolled seaward like a rope of sand,
Nor left one leafy vine or tree
Of all that Eden nestling down
Below that moat by Shasta town!

* * * * * *

The old man sat his cabin's sill,
His gray head bowed to hands and knee;
The child went forth, sang pleasantly,
Where burst the ditch the day before,
And picked some pebbles from the hill.
The old man moaned, moaned o'er and o'er:
"My babe is dowerless, and I
Must fold my helpless hands and die!
Ah, me! What curse comes ever down
On me and mine at Shasta town."

"Good Grandpa, see!" the glad child said,
And so leaned softly to his side,—
Laid her gold head to his gray head,
And merry voiced and cheery cried,
"Good Grandpa, do not weep, but see!

I've found a peck of orange seeds!
I searched the hill for vine or tree;
Not one!—not even oats or weeds;
But, oh! such heaps of orange seeds!

"Come, good Grandpa! Now, once you said
That God is good. So this may teach
That we must plant each seed, and each
May grow to be an orange tree.
Now, good Grandpa, please raise your head,
And please come plant the seeds with me."
And prattling thus, or like to this,
The child thrust her full hands in his.

He sprang, sprang upright as of old.
" 'Tis gold! 'tis gold! my hidden vein!
'Tis gold for you, sweet babe, 'tis gold!
Yea, God is good; we plant again!"
So one old miner still sits down
By pleasant, sunlit Shasta town.

THE SIOUX CHIEF'S DAUGHTER

Two gray hawks ride the rising blast;
Dark cloven clouds drive to and fro
By peaks pre-eminent in snow;
A sounding river rushes past,
So wild, so vortex-like, and vast.

A lone lodge tops the windy hill;
A tawny maiden, mute and still,
Stands waiting at the river's brink,
As eager, fond as you can think.
A mighty chief is at her feet;
She does not heed him wooing so—
She hears the dark, wild waters flow;
She waits her lover, tall and fleet,
From out far beaming hills of snow.

He comes! The grim chief springs in air—
His brawny arm, his blade is bare.

She turns; she lifts her round, brown hand;
She looks him fairly in the face;
She moves her foot a little pace
And says, with calmness and command,
"There's blood enough in this lorn land.

"But see! a test of strength and skill,
Of courage and fierce fortitude;
To breast and wrestle with the rude
And storm-born waters, now I will
Bestow you both.

" . . . Stand either side!
And you, my burly chief, I know
Would choose my right. Now peer you low
Across the waters wild and wide.
See! leaning so this morn I spied
Red berries dip yon farther side.

"See, dipping, dripping in the stream!
Twin boughs of autumn berries gleam!

"Now this, brave men, shall be the test:
Plunge in the stream, bear knife in teeth
To cut yon bough for bridal wreath.
Plunge in! and he who bears him best,
And brings yon ruddy fruit to land
The first, shall have both heart and hand."

Two tawny men, tall, brown and thewed
Like antique bronzes rarely seen,
Shot up like flame.

She stood between
Like fixed, impassive fortitude.
Then one threw robes with sullen air,
And wound red fox-tails in his hair;
But one with face of proud delight
Entwined a wing of snowy white.

She stood between. She sudden gave
The sign and each impatient brave
Shot sudden in the sounding wave;
The startled waters gurgled round;
Their stubborn strokes kept sullen sound.

Oh, then uprose the love that slept!
Oh, then her heart beat loud and strong!
Oh, then the proud love pent up long
Broke forth in wail upon the air!
And leaning there she sobbed and wept,
With dark face mantled in her hair.

She sudden lifts her leaning brow.
He nears the shore, her love! and now
The foam flies spouting from the face
That laughing lifts from out the race.

The race is won, the work is done!
She sees the kingly crest of snow;
She knows her tall, brown Idaho.
She cries aloud, she laughing cries,
And tears are streaming from her eyes:
"O splendid, kingly Idaho!
I kiss thy lifted crest of snow.

"My tall and tawny king, come back!
Come swift, O sweet! why falter so?
Come! Come! What thing has crossed your track?
I kneel to all the gods I know. . . .
Great Spirit, what is this I dread?
Why, there is blood! the wave is red!
That wrinkled chief, outstripped in race,
Dives down, and, hiding from my face,
Strikes underneath.

" . . . He rises now!
Now plucks my hero's berry bough,
And lifts aloft his red fox head,

And signals he has won for me. . . .
Hist, softly! Let him come and see.

"Oh, come! my white-crowned hero, come!
Oh, come! and I will be your bride,
Despite yon chieftain's craft and might.
Come back to me! my lips are dumb,
My hands are helpless with despair;
The hair you kissed, my long, strong hair,
Is reaching to the ruddy tide,
That you may clutch it when you come.

"How slow he buffets back the wave!
O God, he sinks! O Heaven! save
My brave, brave king! He rises! see!
Hold fast, my hero! Strike for me.
Strike straight this way! Strike firm and strong!
Hold fast your strength. It is not long—
O God, he sinks! He sinks! Is gone!

"And did I dream and do I wake?
Or did I wake and now but dream?
And what is this crawls from the stream?
Oh, here is some mad, mad mistake!
What, you! the red fox at my feet?
You first, and failing from the race?
What! You have brought me berries red?
What! You have brought your bride a wreath?
You sly red fox with wrinkled face—
That blade has blood between your teeth!

"Lie low! lie low! while I lean o'er
And clutch your red blade to the shore. . . .
Ha! ha! Take that! take that and that!

Ha! ha! So, through your coward throat
The full day shines! . . . Two fox-tails
float
Far down, and I but mock thereat.

"But what is this? What snowy crest
Climbs out the willows of the west,
All dripping from his streaming hair?
'Tis he! My hero brave and fair!
His face is lifting to my face,
And who shall now dispute the race?

"The gray hawks pass, O love! and doves
O'er yonder lodge shall coo their loves.
My hands shall heal your wounded breast,
And in yon tall lodge two shall rest."

A SHASTA TALE OF LOVE

"And God saw the light that it was good."

I heard a tale long, long ago,
Where I had gone apart to pray
By Shasta's pyramid of snow,
That touches me unto this day.
I know the fashion is to say
An Arab tale, an Orient lay;
But when the grocer rings my gold
On counter, flung from greasy hold,
He cares not from Acadian vale
It comes, or savage mountain chine;—
But this the Shastan tale:

Once in the olden, golden days,
When men and beasts companioned, when
All went in peace about their ways
Nor God had hid His face from men
Because man slew his brother beast
To make his most unholy feast,
A gray coyote, monkish cowled,
Upraised his face and wailed and howled
The while he made his patient round;
For lo! the red men all lay dead,
Stark, frozen on the ground.

The very dogs had fled the storm,
A mother with her long, meshed hair
Bound tight about her baby's form,
Lay frozen, all her body bare.
Her last shred held her babe in place;
Her last breath warmed her baby's face.
Then, as the good monk brushed the snow

Aside from mother loving so,
He heard God from the mount above
Speak through the clouds and loving say:
"Yea, all is dead but Love."

"Now take up Love and cherish her,
And seek the white man with all speed,
And keep Love warm within thy fur;
For oh, he needeth love indeed.
Take all and give him freely, all
Of love you find, or great or small;
For he is very poor in this,
So poor he scarce knows what love is."
The gray monk raised Love in his paws
And sped, a ghostly streak of gray,
To where the white man was.

But man uprose, enraged to see
A gaunt wolf track his new-hewn town.
He called his dogs, and angrily
He brought his flashing rifle down.
Then God said: "On his hearthstone lay
The seed of Love, and come away;
The seed of Love, 'tis needed so,
And pray that it may grow and grow."
And so the gray monk crept at night
And laid Love down, as God had said,
A faint and feeble light.

So faint, indeed, the cold hearthstone
It seemed would chill starved Love to death;
And so the monk gave all his own
And crouched and fanned it with his breath
Until a red cock crowed for day.
Then God said: "Rise up, come away."

The beast obeyed, but yet looked back
All morn along his lonely track;
For he had left his all in all,
His own Love, for that famished Love
Seemed so exceeding small.

And God said: "Look not back again."
But ever, where a campfire burned,
And he beheld strong, burly men
At meat, he sat him down and turned
His face to wail and wail and mourn
The Love laid on that cold hearthstone.
Then God was angered, and God said:
"Be thou a beggar then; thy head
Hath been a fool, but thy swift feet,
Because they bore sweet Love, shall be
The fleetest of all fleet."

And ever still about the camp,
By chine or plain, in heat or hail,
A homeless, hungry, hounded tramp,
The gaunt coyote keeps his wail.
And ever as he wails he turns
His head, looks back and yearns and yearns
For lost Love, laid that wintry day
To warm a hearthstone far away.
Poor loveless, homeless beast, I keep
Your lost Love warm for you, and, too,
A cañon cool and deep.

LOVE IN THE SIERRAS

"No, not so lonely now—I love
A forest maiden; she is mine
And on Sierras' slopes of pine,
The vines below, the snows above,
A solitary lodge is set
Within a fringe of water'd firs;
And there my wigwam fires burn,
Fed by a round brown patient hand,
That small brown faithful hand of hers
That never rests till my return.
The yellow smoke is rising yet;
Tiptoe, and see it where you stand
Lift like a column from the land.

"There are no sea-gems in her hair,
No jewels fret her dimpled hands,
And half her bronzen limbs are bare.
Her round brown arms have golden bands,
Broad, rich, and by her cunning hands
Cut from the yellow virgin ore,
And she does not desire more.
I wear the beaded wampum belt
That she has wove—the sable pelt
That she has fringed red threads around;
And in the morn, when men are not,
I wake the valley with the shot
That brings the brown deer to the ground.
And she beside the lodge at noon
Sings with the wind, while baby swings
In sea-shell cradle by the bough—
Sings low, so like the clover sings
With swarm of bees; I hear her now,
I see her sad face through the moon. . .

Such songs!—would earth had more of such!
She has not much to say, and she
Lifts never voice to question me
In aught I do . . . and that is much.
I love her for her patient trust,
And my love's forty-fold return—
A value I have not to learn
As you . . . at least, as many must . . .

. . . "She is not over tall or fair;
Her breasts are curtained by her hair,
And sometimes, through the silken fringe,
I see her bosom's wealth, like wine
Burst through in luscious ruddy tinge—
And all its wealth and worth are mine.
I know not that one drop of blood
Of prince or chief is in her veins:
I simply say that she is good,
And loves me with pure womanhood.
. . . When that is said, why, what remains?"

OLD GIB AT CASTLE ROCKS*

His eyes are dim, he gropes his way,
His step is doubtful, slow,
And now men pass him by today:
But forty years ago—
Why forty years ago I say
Old Gib was good to know.

For, forty years ago today,
Where cars glide to and fro,
The Modoc held the world at bay,
And blood was on the snow.
Ay, forty years ago I say
Old Gib was good to know.

Full forty years ago today
This valley lay in flame;
Up yonder pass and far away,
Red ruin swept the same:
Two women, with their babes at play,
Were butchered in black shame.

'Twas then with gun and flashing eye
Old Gib loomed like a pine;
"Now will you fight, or will you fly?
I'll take a fight in mine.
Come let us fight; come let us die!"
There came just twenty-nine.

Just twenty-nine who dared to die,
And, too, a motley crew
Of half-tamed red men; would they fly,
Or would they fight him too?

No time to question or reply,
That was a time to *do*.

Up, up, straight up where thunders grow
And growl in Castle Rocks,
Straight up till Shasta gleamed in snow,
And shot red battle shocks;
Till clouds lay shepherded below,
A thousand ghostly flocks.

Yet up and up Old Gibson led,
No looking backward then;
His bare feet bled; the rocks were red
From torn, bare-footed men.
Yet up, up, up, till well nigh dead—
The Modoc in his den!

Then cried the red chief from his height,
"Now, white man, what would you?
Behold my hundreds for the fight,
But yours so faint and few;
We are as rain, as hail at night
But you, you are as dew.

"White man, go back; I beg go back,
I will not fight so few;
Yet if I hear one rifle crack,
Be that the doom of you!
Back! down, I say, back down your track,
Back, down! What else to do?"

"What else to do? Avenge or die!
Brave men have died before;
And you shall fight, or you shall fly.
You find no women more,

No babes to butcher now; for I
Shall storm your Castle's door!"

Then bang! whiz bang! whiz bang and ping!
Six thousand feet below,
Sweet Sacramento ceased to sing,
But wept and wept, for oh!
These arrows sting as adders sting,
And they kept stinging so.

Then one man cried: "Brave men have died,
And we can die as they;
But ah! my babe, my one year's bride!
And they so far away.
Brave Captain lead us back—aside,
Must all here die today?"

His face, his hands, his body bled:
Yea, no man there that day—
No white man there but turned to red,
In that fierce fatal fray;
But Gib with set teeth only said:
"No; we came here to stay!"

They stayed and stayed, and Modocs stayed,
But when the night came on,
No white man there was now afraid,
The last Modoc had gone;
His ghost in Castle Rocks was laid
Till everlasting dawn.

* Parties with Indian depredation claims against the Government desiring exact information touching the first trouble with the Modocs, now nearly forty years ago, the venerable leader of the volunteers in the first battle made out, with his own hand, the following quaint account of it, swore to it before a Notary,

and sent it to Washington. The italics, capitals, and all are as he set them down in his crude but truthful way.—*Frank Leslie's Magazine,* 1893.

I Reuben P. Gibson Was Born in Lowell Mass in 1826 of American Parents, shiped on board a whaler of New Bedford in 1846, Rounded Cape Horn, spent several years on the Pacific Ocean, and in 1846 landed in California. Came to the Mines in Shasta County California, and have lived here in Shasta County more than 40 years, most of which time I have been and am now a Magistrate. I have had much to do with Indians, and in 1855 they became Very Restless, and some of them took to the Castle Rocks, Called Castle del Diablo, at that time by the Mexicans, and they—the Hostiles began to destroy our Property, and Kill White people. Troops of the Regular Army tried to engage them, but found them inaccessible. I then raised a Company of Twenty-Nine White men and thirty Indian (friendly) Scouts and after hard Perilous Marches by Night, We engaged and *destroyed* the Hostiles, having taken Many Scalps. This battle was Fought in the Castle Rocks in this Shasta County and was in June 1855. The hostiles were Modocs and Other Renegades and this was the first Battle in a war that *Spread all over the Coast* I had Some Indians hurt, and one man mortally wounded, James Lane by name. Some Others were more or less hurt with Arrows. Joaquin Miller Received an Arrow in the face and Neck at my Side and we thought would die but at last got Well. He and Mountain Joe had a Post at Soda Springs below Castle Rocks, and their property had been destroyed and made untenable. In all My Experience I know of nothing in Indian warfare so effectual for good as this Campaign. The indians had Possessions of the lines of travel *connecting* Middle and Northern California and it Was impossible for the Mails to get through until the Hostiles were destroyed.

(Signed) Reuben P Gibson

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 17th day of November, 1892, and I hereby certify that I am well acquainted with said affiant and know him to be a person of veracity and entitled to credit. He is a Justice of the Peace in this Shasta County.

[seal] F. P. Primm,

Notary Public in and for Shasta County, Cal.

Let me here introduce a line of facts stranger than anything imagined in all these pages. I had not intended to insert these verses and had delivered to my publishers the completed collection without them. Against my objection that the lines were not

only too personal, but unequal, it was urged that they would be missed by my readers; besides their preservation was due to my old commander, and as this was the first of my three terrible Indian campaigns, and I had served only as private instead of leader, I could hardly be held guilty of egotism. Deference to the dead made me consent to try and find the lines at once in some library. On my way I met a man whom I knew but slightly as U. S. Marshal under President Hayes. My weary eyes were unequal to the task before me, and I asked him to go with me. This he did, and now let his letter tell the rest.

"Oakland, Dec. 20, 1896.

"Joaquin, my dear fellow, I enclose herewith the copies you expressed a wish for. I think they are exact. I was especially careful in making the affidavit of Old Gib; so where he differs with Webster orthographically, I follow Gib.

"Now my boy, I've a little story. I'll be considerate and make it brief. In the early part of the summer of 1855, I was one of a company of about twenty that left Auburn, Placer Co., on a prospecting expedition, intending, unless we found satisfactory prospects nearer, to go to the Trinity. We crossed the Yuba and Feather, camping a few days on Nelson Creek, then traveling in a northwesterly direction, we reached the headwaters of the Sacramento, where we found a party of white men and Indians who, a day or two previous to our meeting them, had had a desperate fight with Indians. They told us they had lost several men, killed and wounded, but had nearly exterminated the Indians. I saw one of their men, a boy in appearance, who had, as I understood, received two arrow wounds in the face and neck. He was in great pain, and no one believed he could recover.

"Twelve years later I, then Sheriff of Placer Co., had occasion to go to Shasta on official business. W. E. Hopping was then Sheriff of Shasta Co. In the course of conversation with him, I spoke of the incident narrated above. He interrupted me, and said: 'The Captain of the volunteers at the battle is in town.' He found him, and introduced me to the man who was doubtless Old Gib, though his name has gone from my memory. I asked about the young fellow who was so desperately wounded. 'Oh, he pulled through all right, the game little cuss,' said he, 'he's up in Oregon, I believe.' I don't think he mentioned his name, but in copying the affidavit of Old Gib, it dawned upon me who that 'game little cuss' was. Yours,

A. W. Poole."

THE LARGER COLLEGE

ON LAYING THE COLLEGE CORNER-STONE

Where San Diego seas are warm,
Where winter winds from warm Cathay
Sing sibilant, where blossoms swarm
With Hybla's bees, we come to lay
This tribute of the truest, best,
The warmest daughter of the West.

Here Progress plants her corner-stone
Against this warm, still, Cortez wave.
In ashes of the Aztec's throne,
In tummals of the Toltec's grave,
We plant this stone, and from the sod
Pick painted fragments of his god.

Here Progress lifts her torch to teach
God's pathway through the pass of care;
Her altar-stone Balboa's Beach,
Her incense warm, sweet, perfumed air;
Such incense! where white strophes reach
And lap and lave Balboa's Beach!

We plant this stone as some small seed
Is sown at springtime, warm with earth;
We sow this seed as some good deed
Is sown, to grow until its worth
Shall grow, through rugged steeps of time,
To touch the utmost star sublime.

We lift this lighthouse by the sea,
The westmost sea, the westmost shore,
To guide man's ship of destiny

When Scylla and Charybdis roar;
To teach him strength, to proudly teach
God's grandeur, where His white palms reach:

To teach not Sybil books alone;
Man's books are but a climbing stair,
Lain step by step, like stairs of stone;
The stairway here, the temple there—
Man's lampad honor, and his trust,
The God who called him from the dust.

Man's books are but man's alphabet,
Beyond and on his lessons lie—
The lessons of the violet,
The large gold letters of the sky;
The love of beauty, blossomed soil,
The large content, the tranquil toil:

The toil that nature ever taught,
The patient toil, the constant stir,
The toil of seas where shores are wrought,
The toil of Christ, the carpenter;
The toil of God incessantly
By palm-set land or frozen sea.

Behold this sea, that sapphire sky!
Where nature does so much for man,
Shall man not set his standard high,
And hold some higher, holier plan?
Some loftier plan than ever planned
By outworn book of outworn land?

Where God has done so much for man!
Shall man for God do aught at all?

The soul that feeds on books alone—
I count that soul exceeding small
That lives alone by book and creed,—
A soul that has not learned to read.

TO THE PIONEERS

READ SAN FRANCISCO, 1894

How swift this sand, gold-laden, runs!
How slow these feet, once swift and firm!
Ye came as romping, rosy sons,
Come jocund up at College term;
Ye came so jolly, stormy, strong,
Ye drown'd the roll-call with your song.
But now ye lean a list'ning ear
And—"*Adsum! Adsum!* I am here!"

My brave world-builders of a world
That tops the keystone, star of States,
All hail! Your battle flags are furled
In fruitful peace. The golden gates
Are won. The jasper walls be yours.
Your sun sinks down yon soundless shores.
Night falls. But lo! your lifted eyes
Greet gold outcroppings in the skies.

Companioned with Sierra's peaks
Our storm-born eagle shrieks his scorn
Of doubt or death, and upward seeks
Through unseen worlds the coming morn.
Or storm, or calm, or near, or far,
His eye fixed on the morning star,
He knows, as God knows, there is dawn;
And so keeps on, and on, and on!

So ye, brave men of bravest days,
Fought on and on with battered shield,
Up bastion, rampart, till the rays
Of full morn met ye on the field.

Ye knew not doubt; ye only knew
To do and dare, and dare and do!
Ye knew that time, that God's first-born,
Would turn the darkest night to morn.

Ye gave your glorious years of youth
And lived as heroes live—and die.
Ye loved the truth, ye lived the truth;
Ye knew that cowards only lie.
Then heed not now one serpent's hiss,
Or trait'rous, trading, Judas kiss.
Let slander wallow in his slime;
Still leave the truth to God and time.

Worn victors, few and true, such clouds
As track God's trailing garment's hem
Where Shasta keeps shall be your shrouds,
And ye shall pass the stars in them.
Your tombs shall be while time endures,
Such hearts as only truth secures;
Your everlasting monuments
Sierra's snow-topt battle tents.

"49"*

We have worked our claims,
We have spent our gold,
Our barks are astrand on the bars;
We are battered and old,
Yet at night we behold,
Outcroppings of gold in the stars.

Chorus—Tho' battered and old,
Our hearts are bold,
Yet oft do we repine;
For the days of old,
For the days of gold,
For the days of forty-nine.

Where the rabbits play,
Where the quail all day
Pipe on the chaparral hill;
A few more days,
And the last of us lays
His pick aside and all is still.

Chorus—

We are wreck and stray,
We are cast away,
Poor battered old hulks and spars;
But we hope and pray,
On the judgment day,
We shall strike it up in the stars.

Chorus—

* This poem is taken from "'49, or the Gold Seekers," by permission of Funk & Wagnalls, New York, publishers of the book. The words have been set to music and selected as the Song of the Native Sons of California. It was sung in Mining Camps long before it was in print.

SAN DIEGO

"O for a beaker of the warm South;
The true, the blushful hypocrine!"

What shall be said of the sun-born Pueblo?
This town sudden born in the path of the sun?
This town of St. James, of the calm San Diego,
As suddenly born as if shot from a gun?

Why, speak of her warmly; why, write her name down
As softer than sunlight, as warmer than wine!
Why speak of her bravely; this ultimate town
With feet in the foam of the vast Argentine:

The vast argent seas of the Aztec, of Cortez!
The boundless white border of battle-torn lands—
The fall of Napoleon, the rise of red Juarez—
The footfalls of nations are heard on her sands.

PIONEERS TO THE GREAT EMERALD LAND

READ AT PORTLAND, 1896

Emerald, emerald, emerald Land;
Land of the sun mists, land of the sea,
Stately and stainless and storied and grand
As cloud-mantled Hood in white majesty—
Mother of States, we are worn, we are gray—
Mother of men, we are going away.

Mother of States, tall mother of men,
Of cities, of churches, of homes, of sweet rest,
We are going away, we must journey again,
As of old we journeyed to the vast, far West.
We tent by the river, our feet once more,
Please God, are set for the ultimate shore.

Mother, white mother, white Oregon
In emerald kilt, with star-set crown
Of sapphire, say is it night? Is it dawn?
Say what of the night? Is it well up and down?
We are going away. . . . From yon high watch tower,
Young men, strong men, say, what of the hour?

Young men, strong men, there is work to be done;
Faith to be cherished, battles to fight,
Victories won were never well won
Save fearlessly won for God and the right.

These cities, these homes, sweet peace and her
spell
Be ashes, but ashes, with the infidel.
* * * * * *

Have Faith, such Faith as your fathers knew,
All else must follow if you have but Faith.
Be true to their Faith, and you must be true.
"Lo! I will be with you," the Master saith.
Good by, dawn breaks; it is coming full day
And one by one we strike tent and away.

Good by. Slow folding our snow-white tents,
Our dim eyes lift to the farther shore,
And never these riddled, gray regiments
Shall answer full roll-call any more.
Yet never a doubt, nay, never a fear
Of old, or now, knew the Pioneer.

ALASKA

Ice built, ice bound and ice bounded,
Such cold seas of silence! such room!
Such snow-light, such sea light confounded
With thunders that smite like a doom!
Such grandeur! such glory! such gloom!
Hear that boom! hear that deep distant boom
Of an avalanche hurled
Down this unfinished world!

Ice seas! and ice summits! ice spaces
In splendor of white, as God's throne!
Ice worlds to the pole! and ice places
Untracked, and unnamed, and unknown!
Hear that boom! Hear the grinding, the groan
Of the ice-gods in pain! Hear the moan
Of yon ice mountain hurled
Down this unfinished world.

TWILIGHT AT THE HIGHTS

The brave young city by the Balboa seas
Lies compassed about by the hosts of night—
Lies humming, low, like a hive of bees;
And the day lies dead. And its spirit's flight
Is far to the west; while the golden bars
That bound it are broken to a dust of stars.

Come under my oaks, oh, drowsy dusk!
The wolf and the dog; dear incense hour
When Mother Earth hath a smell of musk,
And things of the spirit assert their power —
When candles are set to burn in the west—
Set head and foot to the day at rest.

ARBOR DAY

Against our golden orient dawns
We lift a living light to-day,
That shall outshine the splendid bronze
That lords and lights that lesser Bay.

Sweet Paradise was sown with trees;
Thy very name, lorn Nazareth,
Means woods, means sense of birds and bees,
And song of leaves with lisping breath.

God gave us Mother Earth, full blest
With robes of green in healthful fold;
We tore the green robes from her breast!
We sold our mother's robes for gold!

We sold her garments fair, and she
Lies shamed and naked at our feet!
In penitence we plant a tree;
We plant the cross and count it meet.

Lo, here, where Balboa's waters toss,
Here in this glorious Spanish bay,
We plant the cross, the Christian cross,
The Crusade Cross of Arbor Day.

BY THE BALBOA SEAS

The golden fleece is at our feet,
Our hills are girt in sheen of gold;
Our golden flower-fields are sweet
With honey hives. A thousand-fold
More fair our fruits on laden stem
Than Jordan tow'rd Jerusalem.

Behold this mighty sea of seas!
The ages pass in silence by.
Gold apples of Hesperides
Hang at our God-land gates for aye.
Our golden shores have golden keys
Where sound and sing the Balboa seas.

MAGNOLIA BLOSSOMS

The broad magnolia's blooms are white;
Her blooms are large, as if the moon
Had lost her way some lazy night,
And lodged here till the afternoon.

Oh, vast white blossoms breathing love!
White bosom of my lady dead,
In your white heaven overhead
I look, and learn to look above.

CALIFORNIA'S CHRISTMAS

The stars are large as lilies! Morn
Seems some illumined story—
The story of our Savior born,
Told from old turrets hoary—
The full moon smiling tips a horn
And hies to bed in glory!

My sunclad city walks in light
And lasting summer weather;
Red roses bloom on bosoms white
And rosy cheeks together.
If you should smite one cheek, still smite
For she will turn the other.

The thronged warm street tides to and fro
And Love, roseclad, discloses.
The only snowstorm we shall know
Is this white storm of roses—
It seems like Maytime, mating so,
And—Nature counting noses.

Soft sea winds sleep on yonder tide;
You hear some boatmen rowing.
Their sisters' hands trail o'er the side;
They toy with warm waves flowing;
Their laps are laden deep and wide
From rose-trees green and growing.

Such roses white! such roses red!
Such roses richly yellow!
The air is like a perfume fed
From autumn fruits full mellow—

But see! a brother bends his head,
An oar forgets its fellow!

Give me to live in land like this,
Nor let me wander further;
Some sister in some boat of bliss
And I her only brother—
Sweet paradise on earth it is;
I would not seek another.

THE MEN OF FORTY-NINE

Those brave old bricks of forty-nine!
What lives they lived! what deaths they died!
A thousand cañons, darkling wide
Below Sierra's slopes of pine,
Receive them now. And they who died
Along the far, dim, desert route—
Their ghosts are many. Let them keep
Their vast possessions. The Piute,
The tawny warrior, will dispute
No boundary with these. And I
Who saw them live, who felt them die,
Say, let their unplow'd ashes sleep,
Untouch'd by man, on plain or steep.

The bearded, sunbrown'd men who bore
The burden of that frightful year,
Who toil'd, but did not gather store,
They shall not be forgotten. Drear
And white, the plains of Shoshonee
Shall point us to that farther shore,
And long, white, shining lines of bones,
Make needless sign or white mile-stones.

The wild man's yell, the groaning wheel;
The train that moved like drifting barge;
The dust that rose up like a cloud —
Like smoke of distant battle! Loud
The great whips rang like shot, and steel
Of antique fashion, crude and large,
Flash'd back as in some battle charge.

They sought, yea, they did find their rest.
Along that long and lonesome way,

These brave men buffet'd the West
With lifted faces. Full were they
Of great endeavor. Brave and true
As stern Crusader clad in steel,
They died a-field as it was fit.
Made strong with hope, they dared to do
Achievement that a host today
Would stagger at, stand back and reel,
Defeated at the thought of it.

What brave endeavor to endure!
What patient hope, when hope was past!
What still surrender at the last,
A thousand leagues from hope! how pure
They lived, how proud they died!
How generous with life! The wide
And gloried age of chivalry
Hath not one page like this to me.

Let all these golden days go by,
In sunny summer weather. I
But think upon my buried brave,
And breathe beneath another sky.
Let Beauty glide in gilded car,
And find my sundown seas afar,
Forgetful that 'tis but one grave
From eastmost to the westmost wave.

Yea, I remember! The still tears
That o'er uncoffin'd faces fell!
The final, silent, sad farewell!
God! these are with me all the years!
They shall be with me ever. I
Shall not forget. I hold a trust.
They are part of my existence. When

Swift down the shining iron track
You sweep, and fields of corn flash back,
And herds of lowing steers move by,
And men laugh loud, in mute mistrust,
I turn to other days, to men
Who made a pathway with their dust.

THE HEROES OF AMERICA

O perfect heroes of the earth,
That conquer'd forests, harvest set!
O sires, mothers of my West!
How shall we count your proud bequest?
But yesterday ye gave us birth;
We eat your hard-earned bread today,
Nor toil nor spin nor make regret,
But praise our petty selves and say
How great we are. We all forget
The still endurance of the rude
Unpolish'd sons of solitude.

What strong, uncommon men were these,
These settlers hewing to the seas!
Great horny-handed men and tan;
Men blown from many a barren land
Beyond the sea; men red of hand,
And men in love, and men in debt,
Like David's men in battle set;
And men whose very hearts had died,
Who only sought these woods to hide
Their wretchedness, held in the van;
Yet every man among them stood
Alone, along that sounding wood,
And every man somehow a man.
They push'd the mailéd wood aside,
They toss'd the forest like a toy,
That grand forgotten race of men—
The boldest band that yet has been
Together since the siege of Troy.

YOSEMITE

Sound! sound! sound!
O colossal walls and crown'd
In one eternal thunder!
Sound! sound! sound!
O ye oceans overhead,
While we walk, subdued in wonder,
In the ferns and grasses, under
And beside the swift Merced!

Fret! fret! fret!
Streaming, sounding banners, set
On the giant granite castles
In the clouds and in the snow!
But the foe he comes not yet,—
We are loyal, valiant vassals,
And we touch the trailing tassels
Of the banners far below.

Surge! surge! surge!
From the white Sierra's verge,
To the very valley blossom.
Surge! surge! surge!
Yet the song-bird builds a home,
And the mossy branches cross them,
And the tasselled tree-tops toss them,
In the clouds of falling foam.

Sweep! sweep! sweep!
O ye heaven-born and deep,
In one dread, unbroken chorus!
We may wonder or may weep,—
We may wait on God before us;

We may shout or lift a hand,—
We may bow down and deplore us,
But may never understand.

Beat! beat! beat!
We advance, but would retreat
From this restless, broken breast
Of the earth in a convulsion.
We would rest, but dare not rest,
For the angel of expulsion
From this Paradise below
Waves us onward and . . . we go.

DEAD IN THE SIERRAS

His footprints have failed us,
Where berries are red,
And madroños are rankest,
The hunter is dead!

The grizzly may pass
By his half-open door;
May pass and repass
On his path, as of yore;

The panther may crouch
In the leaves on his limb;
May scream and may scream,—
It is nothing to him.

Prone, bearded, and breasted
Like columns of stone;
And tall as a pine—
As a pine overthrown!

His camp-fires gone,
What else can be done
Than let him sleep on
Till the light of the sun?

Ay, tombless! what of it?
Marble is dust,
Cold and repellent;
And iron is rust.

"THE FOURTH" IN OREGON*

Hail, Independence of old ways!
Old worlds! The West declares the West,
Her storied ways, her gloried days,
Because the West deserveth best.
This new, true land of noblest deeds
Has rights, has sacred rights and needs.

Sing, ye who may, this natal day;
Of dauntless thought, of men of might,
In lesser lands and far away.
But truth is truth and right is right.
And, oh, to sing like sounding flood,
These boundless boundaries writ in blood!

Three thousand miles of battle deeds,
Of burning Moscows, Cossacks, snows;
Then years and years of British greed,
Of grasping greed; of lurking foes.
I say no story ever writ
Or said, or sung, surpasses it!

And who has honored us, and who
Has bravely dared stand up and say:
"Give ye to Cæsar Cæsar's due?"
Unpaid, unpensioned, mute and gray,
Some few survivors of the brave,
Still hold enough land for a grave.

How much they dared, how much they won—
Why, o'er your banner of bright stars,
Their star should be the blazing sun
Above the battle star of Mars.

Here, here beside brave Whitman's dust,
Let us be bravely, frankly just.

The mountains from the first were so.
The mountains from the first were free.
They ever laid the tyrant low,
And kept the boon of liberty.
The levels of the earth alone
Endured the tyrant, bore the throne.

The levels of the earth alone
Bore Sodoms, Babylons of crime,
And all sad cities overthrown
Along the surging surf of time.
The coward, slave, creeps in the fen:
God's mountains only cradle men.

Aye, wise and great was Washington,
And brave the men of Bunker Hill;
Most brave and worthy every one,
In work and faith and fearless will
And brave endeavor for the right,
Until yon stars burst through their night.

Aye, wise and good was Washington.
Yet when he laid his sword aside,
The bravest deed yet done was done.
And when in stately strength and pride
He took the plow and turned the mold
He wrote God's autograph in gold.

He wrought the fabled fleece of gold
In priceless victories of peace,
With plowshare set in mother mold;
Then gathering the golden fleece

About his manly, martial breast,
This farmer laid him down to rest.

O! this was godlike! And yet, who
Of all men gathered here today
Has not drawn sword as swift as true,
Then laid its reddened edge away,
And took the plow, and turned the mold
To sow yon sunny steeps with gold.

Aye, this true valor! Sing who will
Of battle charge, of banners borne
Triumphant up the blazing hill
On battle's front, of banners torn,
Of horse and rider torn and rent,
Red regiment on regiment.

Yet this were boy's play to that man
Who, far out yonder lone frontier,
With wife and babe fought in the van,
Fought on, fought on, year after year.
No brave, bright flag to cheer the brave,
No farewell gun above his grave.

I say such silent pioneers
Who here set plowshare to the sun,
And silent gave their sunless years,
Were kings of heroes every one.
No Brandywine, no Waterloo
E'er knew one hero half so true!

A nation's honor for our dead,
God's pity for the stifled pain;
And tears as ever woman shed,
Sweet woman's tears for maimed or slain.

But man's tears for the mute, unknown,
Who fights alone, who falls alone.

The very bravest of the brave,
The hero of all lands to me?
Far up yon yellow lifting wave
His brave ship cleaves the golden sea.
And gold or gain, or never gain,
No argosy sails there in vain.

And who the coward? Hessian he,
Who turns his back upon the field,
Who wears the slavish livery
Of town or city, sells his shield
Of honor, as his ilk of old
Sold body, soul, for British gold.

My heroes, comrades of the field,
Content ye here; here God to you,
Whatever fate or change may yield,
Has been most generous and true.
Yon everlasting snow-peaks stand
His sentinels about this land.

Yon bastions of God's house are white
As heaven's porch with heaven's peace.
Behold His portals bathed in light!
Behold at hand the golden fleece!
Behold the fatness of the land
On every hill, on every hand!

Yon bannered snow-peaks point and plead
God's upward path, God's upward plan
Of peace, God's everlasting creed

Of love and brotherhood of man.
Thou mantled magistrates in white,
Give us His light! Give us His light!

* This poem was read, 1896, near the scene of the Whitman massacre at the old Mission. The story of Oregon—*Aure il Agua;* Hear the Waters—glowing with great deeds, drama, tragedy, surpassing anything in the history of any other State, east or west, old or new. When the paw of the British lion reached down from Canada and laid heavy hand on Oregon, these pioneers met under their great firs and proclaimed to the world that they were not British subjects, but American citizens. Marcus P. Whitman mounted horse in midwinter and set out alone and rode 3,000 miles to lay the facts before the President. Yet the Government never lifted a hand to help save Oregon to the Nation. So far from that, a Senator rose in his place and literally denounced all effort in that direction, saying: "I would to God we had never heard of that country; we do not want a foot of ground on the Pacific Ocean." Webster was hardly less cruel. But undaunted, Whitman gathered up hundreds of wagons and led back to Oregon; the first that ever crossed the plains. He saved Oregon, but lost his life and all his house. Then the pioneers, to avenge the massacre, declared war on their own account, fought it to a finish without so much as a single man or gun from the Government, made peace on their own account, and then went to work and dug their own gold from their own ground, and with their own hands coined it and paid their war debts and from the first kept their paper with its face in virgin gold. The coins, virgin gold with a sheaf of wheat on one side, showing the richness of the soil, and a beaver on the reverse, typifying the industry of the people. Oregon is the only division of this republic that ever coined gold under authority of law. And even in later Indian wars Oregon was always treated meanly, most meanly. More than once every man and boy who could carry a gun or drive a team was in the field. My father and his three sons, aged ten, twelve and fourteen, were all at one time teamsters in a supply train. And the Government paid for services and supplies but tardily, if at all. The meanness is incredible. There are millions still due Oregon. No, I am not angry, or selfish either; I never received or claimed one cent for services, supplies or losses. But some of these old pioneers are in need now.

AN ANSWER

Well! who shall lay hand on my harp but me,
Or shall chide my song from the sounding trees?
The passionate sun and the resolute sea,
These were my masters, and only these.

These were my masters, and only these,
And these from the first I obey'd, and they
Shall command me now, and I shall obey
As a dutiful child that is proud to please.

There never were measures as true as the sun,
The sea hath a song that is passingly sweet,
And yet they repeat, and repeat, and repeat,
The same old runes though the new years run.

By unnamed rivers of the Oregon north,
That roll dark-heaved into turbulent hills,
I have made my home....The wild heart thrills
With memories fierce, and a world storms forth.

On eminent peaks that are dark with pine,
And mantled in shadows and voiced in storms,
I have made my camps: majestic gray forms
Of the thunder-clouds, they were companions of mine;

And face set to face, like to lords austere,
Have we talk'd, red-tongued, of the mysteries
Of the circling sun, of the oracled seas,
While ye who judged me had mantled in fear.

Some fragment of thought in the unfinish'd
words;
A cry of fierce freedom, and I claim no more.
What more would you have from the tender of
herds
And of horse on an ultimate Oregon shore?

From men unto God go forth, as alone,
Where the dark pines talk in their tones of the
sea
To the unseen God in a harmony
Of the under seas, and know the unknown.

LOG CABIN LINES

THE SOLDIERS' HOME, WASHINGTON

The monument, tipped with electric fire,
Blazed high in a halo of light below
My low cabin door in the hills that inspire;
And the dome of the Capitol gleamed like snow
In a glory of light, as higher and higher
This wondrous creation of man was sent
To challenge the lights of the firmament.

A tall man, tawny and spare as bone,
With battered old hat and with feet half bare,
With the air of a soldier that was all his own—
Aye, something more than a soldier's air—
Came clutching a staff, with a face like stone;
Limped in through my gate—and I thought to
beg—
Tight clutching a staff, slow dragging a leg.

The bent new moon, like a simitar,
Kept peace in Heaven. All earth lay still.
Some sentinel stars stood watch afar,
Some crickets kept clanging along the hill,
As the tall, stern relic of blood and war
Limped in, and, with hand up to brow half
raised,
Limped up, looked about, as one dazed or crazed.

In the early eighties I built a log cabin in the edge of Washington, to be more in touch with both sides of the Civil War as well as with the smaller republics. And then many noble people who had been ruined in the South were ill content to live in log cabins, as their slaves had lived. I wanted to teach that a log cabin can be made very comfortable, with content at hand.

His gaunt face pleading for food and rest,
His set lips white as a tale of shame,
His black coat tight to a shirtless breast,
His black eyes burning in mine-like flame;
But never a word from his set lips came
As he whipped in line his battered old leg,
And his knees made mouths, and as if to beg.

Aye! black were his eyes; but doubtful and dim
Their vision of beautiful earth, I think.
And I doubt if the distant, dear worlds to him
Were growing brighter as he neared the brink
Of dolorous seas where phantom ships swim.
For his face was as hard as the hard, thin hand
That clutched that staff like an iron band.

"Sir, I am a soldier!" The battered old hat
Stood up as he spake, like to one on parade—
Stood taller and braver as he spake out that—
And the tattered old coat, that was tightly laid
To the battered old breast, looked so trim thereat
That I knew the mouths of the battered old leg
That had opened wide were not made to beg.

"I have wandered and wandered this twenty year:
Searched up and down for my regiments.
Have they gone to that field where no foes appear?
Have they pitched in Heaven their cloud-white tents?
Or, tell me, my friend, shall I find them here
On the hill beyond, at the Soldiers' Home,
Where the weary soldiers have ceased to roam?

"Aye, I am a soldier and a brigadier;
Is this the way to the Soldiers' Home?
There is plenty and rest for us all, I hear,
And a bugler, bidding us cease to roam,
Rides over the hill all the livelong year—
Rides calling and calling the brave to come
And rest and rest in that Soldiers' Home.

"Is this, sir, the way? I wandered in here
Just as one oft will at the close of day.
Aye, I am a soldier and a brigadier!
Now, the Soldiers' Home, sir. Is this the way?
I have wandered and wandered this twenty year,
Seeking some trace of my regiments
Sabered and riddled and torn to rents.

"Aye, I am a soldier and a brigadier!
A battered old soldier in the dusk of his day;
But you don't seem to heed, or you don't seem to hear,
Though, meek as I may, I ask for the way
To the Soldiers' Home, which must be quite near,
While under your oaks, in your easy chair,
You sit and you sit, and you stare and you stare.

"What battle? What deeds did I do in the fight?
Why, sir, I have seen green fields turn as red
As yonder red town in that marvelous light!
Then the great blazing guns! Then the ghastly white dead—
But, tell me, I faint, I must cease to roam!
This battered leg aches! Then this sabered old head—
Is—*is* this the way to the Soldiers' Home?

"Why, I hear men say 't is a Paradise
On the green oak hills by the great red town;
That many old comrades shall meet my eyes;
That a tasseled young trooper rides up and rides down,
With bugle horn blowing to the still blue skies,
Rides calling and calling us to rest and to stay
In that Soldiers' Home. Sir, is this the way?

"My leg is so lame! Then this sabered old head—
Ah! pardon me, sir, I never complain;
But the road is so rough, as I just now said;
And then there is this something that troubles my brain.
It makes the light dance from yon Capitol's dome;
It makes the road dim as I doubtfully tread—
And—sir, *is* this the way to the Soldiers' Home?

"From the first to the last in that desperate war—
Why, I did my part. If I did not fall,
A hair's breadth measure of this skull-bone scar
Was all that was wanting; and then this ball—
But what cared I? Ah! better by far
Have a sabered old head and a shattered old knee
To the end, than not had the praise of Lee—

"What! What do I hear? No home there for me?
Why, I heard men say that the war was at end!
Oh, my head swims so; and I scarce can see!
But a soldier's a soldier, I think, my friend,
Wherever that soldier may chance to be!

And wherever a soldier may chance to roam,
Why, a Soldiers' Home is a soldier's home!"

He turned as to go; but he sank to the grass;
And I lifted my face to the firmament;
For I saw a sentinel white star pass,
Leading the way the old soldier went.
And the light shone bright from the Capitol's dome,
Ah, brighter from Washington's monument,
Lighting his way to the Soldiers' Home.

THE CABIN, Washington, D. C.

OLIVE

Dove-borne symbol, olive bough;
Dove-hued sign from God to men,
As if still the dove and thou
Kept companionship as then.

Dove-hued, holy branch of peace,
Antique, all-enduring tree;
Deluge and the floods surcease—
Deluge and Gethsemane.

THE BATTLE FLAG AT SHENANDOAH

The tented field wore a wrinkled frown,
And the emptied church from the hill looked down
On the emptied road and the emptied town,
That summer Sunday morning.

And here was the blue, and there was the gray;
And a wide green valley rolled away
Between where the battling armies lay,
That sacred Sunday morning.

And Custer sat, with impatient will,
His restless horse, 'mid his troopers still,
As he watched with glass from the oak-set hill,
That silent Sunday morning.

Then fast he began to chafe and to fret;
"There's a battle flag on a bayonet
Too close to my own true soldiers set
For peace this Sunday morning!"

"Ride over, some one," he haughtily said,
"And bring it to me! Why, in bars blood red
And in stars I will stain it, and overhead
Will flaunt it this Sunday morning!"

Then a West-born lad, pale-faced and slim,
Rode out, and touching his cap to him,
Swept down, swept swift as Spring swallows swim,
That anxious Sunday morning.

On, on through the valley! up, up, anywhere!
That pale-faced lad like a bird through the air

Kept on till he climbed to the banner there
That bravest Sunday morning!

And he caught up the flag, and around his waist
He wound it tight, and he turned in haste,
And swift his perilous route retraced
That daring Sunday morning.

All honor and praise to the trusty steed!
Ah! boy, and banner, and all God speed!
God's pity for you in your hour of need
This deadly Sunday morning.

O, deadly shot! and O, shower of lead!
O, iron rain on the brave, bare head!
Why, even the leaves from the trees fall dead
This dreadful Sunday morning!

But he gains the oaks! Men cheer in their might!
Brave Custer is laughing in his delight!
Why, he is embracing the boy outright
This glorious Sunday morning!

But, soft! Not a word has the pale boy said.
He unwinds the flag. It is starred, striped, red
With his heart's best blood; and he falls down dead,
In God's still Sunday morning.

So, wrap this flag to his soldier's breast:
Into stars and stripes it is stained and blest;
And under the oaks let him rest and rest
Till God's great Sunday morning.

THE LOST REGIMENT*

The dying land cried; they heard her death-call,
These bent old men stopped, listened intent;
Then rusty old muskets rushed down from the wall,
And squirrel-guns gleamed in that regiment,
And grandsires marched, old muskets in hand—
The last men left in the old Southland.

The gray grandsires! They were seen to reel,
Their rusty old muskets a wearisome load;
They marched, scarce tall as the cannon's wheel,
Marched stooping on up the corduroy road;
These gray old boys, all broken and bent,
Marched out, the gallant last regiment.

* In a pretty little village of Louisiana destroyed by shells toward the end of the war, on a bayou back from the river, a great number of very old men had been left by their sons and grandsons, while they went to the war. And these old men, many of them veterans of other wars, formed themselves into a regiment, made for themselves uniforms, picked up old flintlock guns, even mounted a rusty old cannon, and so prepared to go to battle if ever the war came within their reach. Toward the close of the war some gunboats came down the river shelling the shore. The old men heard the firing, and, gathering together, they set out with their old muskets and rusty old cannon to try to reach the river over the corduroy road through the cypress swamp. They marched out right merrily that hot day, shouting and bantering to encourage each other, the dim fires of their old eyes burning with desire of battle, although not one of them was young enough to stand erect. And they never came back any more. The shells from the gunboats set the dense and sultry woods on fire. The old men were shut in by the flames—the gray beards and the gray moss and the gray smoke together.

But oh! that march through the cypress trees,
When zest and excitement had died away!
That desolate march through the marsh to the knees—
The gray moss mantling the battered and gray—
These gray grandsires all broken and bent—
The gray moss mantling the regiment.

The gray bent men and the mosses gray;
The dull dead gray of the uniform!
The dull dead skies, like to lead that day,
Dull, dead, heavy and deathly warm!
Oh, what meant more than the cypress meant,
With its mournful moss, to that regiment?

That deadly march through the marshes deep!
That sultry day and the deeds in vain!
The rest on the cypress roots, the sleep—
The sleeping never to rise again!
The rust on the guns; the rust and the rent—
That dying and desolate regiment!

The muskets left leaning against the trees,
The cannon-wheels clogged from the moss o'er-head,
The cypress trees bending on obstinate knees
As gray men kneeling by the gray men dead!
A lone bird rising, long legged and gray,
Slow rising and rising and drifting away.

The dank dead mosses gave back no sound,
The drums lay silent as the drummers there;
The sultry stillness it was so profound
You might have heard an unuttered prayer;

And ever and ever and far away,
Kept drifting that desolate bird in gray.

The long gray shrouds of that cypress wood,
Like vails that sweep where the gray nuns weep—
That cypress moss o'er the dankness deep,
Why, the cypress roots they were running blood;
And to right and to left lay an old man dead—
A mourning cypress set foot and head.

'Twas man hunting men in the wilderness there;
'Twas man hunting man and hunting to slay,
But nothing was found but death that day,
And possibly God—and that bird in gray
Slow rising and rising and drifting away.

Now down in the swamp where the gray men fell
The fireflies volley and volley at night,
And black men belated are heard to tell
Of the ghosts in gray in a mimic fight—
Of the ghosts of the gallant old men in gray
Who silently died in the swamp that day.

MISCELLANEOUS LINES

THE WORLD IS A BETTER WORLD

Aye, the world is a better old world today!
And a great good mother this earth of ours;
Her white tomorrows are a white stairway
To lead us up to the far star flowers—
The spiral tomorrows that one by one
We climb and we climb in the face of the sun.

Aye, the world is a braver old world today!
For many a hero dares bear with wrong—
Will laugh at wrong and will turn away;
Will whistle it down the wind with a song—
Dares slay the wrong with his splendid scorn!
The bravest old hero that ever was born!

TO SAVE A SOUL

It seems to me a grandest thing
To save the soul from perishing
By planting it where heaven's rain
May reach and make it grow again.

It seems to me the man who leaves
The soul to perish is as one
Who gathers up the empty sheaves
When all the golden grain is done.

DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI AT NIGHT

Sowing the waves with a fiery rain,
Leaving behind us a lane of light,
Weaving a web in the woof of night,
Cleaving a continent's wealth in twain.

Lighting the world with a way of flame,
Writing, even as the lightnings write
High over the awful arched forehead of night,
Jehovah's dread, unutterable name.

A NUBIAN FACE ON THE NILE

One night we touched the lily shore,
And then passed on, in night indeed,
Against the far white waterfall.
I saw no more, shall know no more
Of her for aye. And you who read
This broken bit of dream will smile,
Half vexed that I saw aught at all.

MONTARA

Montara, Naples of my West!
Montara, Italy to me!
Montara, newest, truest, best
Of all brave cities by this sea!

I'd rather one wee bungalow
Where I mid-March may sit me down
And watch thy warm waves come and go,
Than two whole blocks of Boston town.

A CHRISTMAS EVE IN CUBA

Their priests are many, for many their sins,
Their sins are many, for their land is fair;
The perfumed waves and the perfumed winds,
The cocoa-palms and the perfumed air;
The proud old Dons, so poor and so proud,
So poor their ghosts can scarce wear a shroud—
This town of Columbus has priests and prayer;
And great bells pealing in the palm land.

A proud Spanish Don lies shriven and dead;
The cross on his breast, a priest at his prayer;
His slave at his feet, his son at his head—
A slave's white face in her midnight hair;
A slave's white face, why, a face as white,
As white as that dead man's face this night—
This town of Columbus can pray for the dead;
Such great bells booming in the palm land.

The moon hangs dead up at heaven's white door;
As dead as the isle of the great, warm seas;
As dead as the Don, so proud and so poor,
With two quite close by the bed on their knees;
The slave at his feet, the son at his head,
And both in tears for the proud man dead—
This town of Columbus has tears, if you please;
And great bells pealing in the palm land.

Aye, both are in tears; for a child might trace
In the face of the slave, as the face of the son,
The same proud look of the dead man's face—
The beauty of one; and the valor of one—
The slave at his feet, the son at his head,

This night of Christ, where the Don lies dead—
This town of Columbus, this land of the sun
Keeps great bells clanging in the palm land.

The slave is so fair, and so wonderful fair!
A statue stepped out from some temple of old;
Why, you could entwine your two hands in her hair,
Nor yet could encompass its ample, dark fold.
And oh, that pitiful, upturned face;
Her master lies dead—she knows her place.
This town of Columbus has hundreds at prayer,
And great bells booming in the palm land.

The proud Don dead, and this son his heir;
This slave his fortune. Now, what shall he do?
Why, what should he do? or what should he care,
Save only to cherish a pride as true?—

To hide his shame as the good priests hide
Black sins confessed when the damned have died.
This town of Columbus has pride with her prayer—
And great bells pealing in the palm land!

Lo! Christ's own hour in the argent seas,
And she, his sister, his own born slave!
His secret is safe; just master and she;
These two, and the dead at the door of the grave. . .

And death, whatever our other friends do,
Why, death, my friend, is a friend most true—
This town of Columbus keeps pride and keeps
prayer,
And her great bells booming everywhere!

COMANCHE

A blazing home, a blood-soaked hearth;
Fair woman's hair with blood upon!
That Ishmaelite of all the earth
Has like a cyclone, come and gone—
His feet are as the blighting dearth;
His hands are daggers drawn.

"To horse! to horse!" the rangers shout,
And red revenge is on his track!
The black-haired Bedouin en route
Looks like a long, bent line of black.
He does not halt nor turn about;
He scorns to once look back.

But on! right on that line of black,
Across the snow-white, sand-sown pass;
The bearded rangers on their track
Bear thirsty sabers bright as glass.
Yet not one red man there looks back;
His nerves are braided brass.

* * * * * *

At last, at last, their mountain came
To clasp its children in their flight!
Up, up from out the sands of flame
They clambered, bleeding to their height;
This savage summit, now so tame,
Their lone star, that dread night!

"Huzzah! Dismount!" the captain cried.
"Huzzah! the rovers cease to roam!
The river keeps yon farther side,
A roaring cataract of foam.

They die, they die for those who died
Last night by hearth and home!"

His men stood still beneath the steep;
The high, still moon stood like a nun.
The horses stood as willows weep;
Their weary heads drooped every one.
But no man there had thought of sleep;
Each waited for the sun.

Vast nun-white moon! Her silver rill
Of snow-white peace she ceaseless poured;
The rock-built battlement grew still,
The deep-down river roared and roared.
But each man there with iron will
Leaned silent on his sword.

Hark! See what light starts from the steep!
And hear, ah, hear that piercing sound.
It is their lorn death-song they keep
In solemn and majestic round.
The red fox of these deserts deep
At last is run to ground.

* * * * * *

Oh, it was weird,—that wild, pent horde!
Their death-lights, their death-wails each one.
The river in sad chorus roared
And boomed like some great funeral gun.
The while each ranger nursed his sword
And waited for the sun.

OUR HEROES OF TODAY

I

With high face held to her ultimate star,
With swift feet set to her mountains of gold,
This new-built world, where the wonders are,
She has built new ways from the ways of old.

II

Her builders of worlds are workers with hands;
Her true world-builders are builders of these,
The engines, the plows; writing poems in sands
Of gold in our golden Hesperides.

III

I reckon these builders as gods among men:
I count them creators, creators who knew
The thrill of dominion, of conquest, as when
God set His stars spinning their spaces of blue.

IV

A song for the groove, and a song for the wheel,
And a roaring song for the rumbling car;
But away with the pomp of the soldier's steel,
And away forever with the trade of war.

V

The hero of time is the hero of thought;
The hero who lives is the hero of peace;
And braver his battles than ever were fought,
From Shiloh back to the battles of Greece.

VI

The hero of heroes is the engineer;
The hero of height and of gnome-built deep,
Whose only fear is the brave man's fear
That some one waiting at home might weep.

VII

The hero we love in this land today
Is the hero who lightens some fellow-man's load—
Who makes of the mountain some pleasant highway;
Who makes of the desert some blossom-sown road.

VIII

Then hurrah! for the land of the golden downs,
For the golden land of the silver horn;
Her heroes have built her a thousand towns,
But never destroyed her one blade of corn.

BY THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI

The king of rivers has a dolorous shore,
A dreamful dominion of cypress-trees,
A gray bird rising forever more,
And drifting away toward the Mexican seas—
A lone bird seeking for some lost mate,
So dolorous, lorn and desolate.

The shores are gray as the sands are gray;
And gray are the trees in their cloaks of moss;—
That gray bird rising and drifting away,
Slow dragging its weary long legs across—
So weary, just over the gray wood's brink;
It wearies one, body and soul to think.

These vast gray levels of cypress wood,
The gray soldiers' graves; and so, God's will—
These cypress-trees' roots are still running blood;
The smoke of battle in their mosses still—
That gray bird wearily drifting away
Was startled some long-since battle day.

HER PICTURE

I see her now—the fairest thing
That ever mocked man's picturing,
I picture her as one who drew
Aside life's curtain and looked through
The mists of all life's mystery
As from a wood to open sea.

I picture her as one who knew
How rare is truth to be untrue—
As one who knew the awful sign
Of death, of life, of the divine
Sweet pity of all loves, all hates,
Beneath the iron-footed fates.

I picture her as seeking peace,
And olive leaves and vine-set land;
While strife stood by on either hand,
And wrung her tears like rosaries.
I picture her in passing rhyme
As of, yet not a part of, these—
A woman born above her time.

The soft, wide eyes of wonderment
That trusting looked you through and through;
The sweet, arched mouth, a bow new bent,
That sent love's arrow swift and true.

That sweet, arched mouth! The Orient
Hath not such pearls in all her stores,
Nor all her storied, spice-set shores
Have fragrance such as it hath spent.

DEAD IN THE LONG, STRONG GRASS*

Dead! stark dead in the long, strong grass!
But he died with his sword in his hand.
Who says it? who saw it? God saw it!
And I knew him! St. George! he would draw it,
Though they swooped down in mass
Till they darkened the land!
Then the seventeen wounds in his breast!
Ah! these witness best!

Dead! stark dead in the long, strong grass!
Dead! and alone in the great dark land!
O mother! not Empress now, mother!
A nobler name, too, than all other,
The laurel leaf fades from thy hand!
O mother that waiteth, a mass!
Masses and chants must be said,
And cypress, instead.

* Born to the saddle and bred by a chain of events to ride with the wind until I met the stolid riders of England, I can now see how it was that Anthony Trollope, Lord Houghton and others of the saddle and "meet" gave me ready place in their midst. Not that the English were less daring; but they were less fortunate; may I say less experienced. I recall the fact that I once found Lord Houghton's brother, Lord Crewe, and his son also, under the hands of the surgeon, near York—one with a broken thigh, and the other with a few broken ribs. But in all our hard riding I never had a scratch.

One morning Trollope hinted that my immunity was due to my big Spanish saddle, which I had brought from Mexico City. I threw my saddle on the grass and rode without so much as a blanket. And I rode neck to neck; and then left them all behind and nearly every one unhorsed.

Prince Napoleon was of the party that morning; and as the

gentlemen pulled themselves together on the return he kept by my side, and finally proposed a tour through Notts and Sherwood Forest on horseback. And so it fell out that we rode together much.

But he had already been persistently trained in the slow military methods, and it was in vain that I tried to teach him to cling to his horse and climb into the saddle as he ran, after the fashion of Indians and vaqueros. He admired it greatly, but seemed to think it unbecoming a soldier.

It was at the Literary Fund dinner, where Stanley and Prince Napoleon stood together when they made their speeches, that I saw this brave and brilliant young man for the last time. He was about to set out for Africa with the English troops to take part in the Zulu war.

He seemed very serious. When about to separate he took my hand, and, looking me all the time in the face, placed a large diamond on my finger, saying something about its being from the land to which he was going. I refused to take it, for I had heard that the Emperor died poor. But as he begged me to keep it, at least till he should come back, it has hardly left my hand since he placed it there.

Piteous that this heir to the throne of France should die alone in the yellow grass at the hand of savages in that same land where the great Emperor had said, "Soldiers, from yonder pyramids twenty centuries behold your deeds."

GARFIELD†

"Bear me out of the battle, for lo, I am sorely wounded."

From out of the vast, wide-bosomed West,
Where gnarled old maples make array,
Deep scarred from Redmen gone to rest,
Where unnamed heroes hew the way
For worlds to follow in their quest,
Where pipes the quail, where squirrels play
Through tops of trees with nuts for toy,
A boy stood forth clear-eyed and tall,
A timid boy, a bashful boy,
Yet comely as a son of Saul—
A boy all friendless, all unknown,
Yet heir apparent to a throne:

A throne the proudest yet on earth
For him who bears him, noblest, best,
And this he won by simple worth,
That boy from out the wooded West.
And now to fall! Pale-browed and prone
He lies in everlasting rest.
The nations clasp the cold, dead hand;
The nations sob aloud at this;
The only dry eyes in the land
Now at the last we know are his;
While she who sends a wreath has won
More conquests than her hosts had done.

Brave heart, farewell. The wheel has run
Full circle, and behold a grave
Beneath thy loved old trees is done.

The druid oaks look up and wave
A solemn beckon back. The brave
Old maples welcome, every one.
Receive him, earth. In center land,
As in the center of each heart,
As in the hollow of God's hand,
The coffin sinks. And we depart
Each on his way, as God deems best
To do, and so deserve to rest.

† Walt Whitman chanced to be in Boston when I last visited Mr. Longfellow, and I was delighted to hear the poet at his table in the midst of his perfect family speak of him most kindly; for at this time the press and all small people were abusing Whitman terribly. Soon after he looked me up at my hotel in Boston, and we two called on the good, gray poet together. I mention this merely to italicize the suggestion that Longfellow's was a large nature.

Many others, I know, stood nearer him, so much nearer and dearer, and maybe I ought not to claim the right to say much of a sacred nature; but somehow I always felt, when he reached out his right hand and drew me to him, and looked me fairly and silently in the face with his earnest seer eyes, that he knew me, did not dislike me, and that he knew, soul to soul, we each sought the good and the beautiful and true, each after his fashion, and as best he knew.

He had a pretty way of always getting out of the house—that beautiful house of his, where Washington had dwelt—into the woods. He possessed a wonderful lot of books, but he knew the birds, the crickets, the flowers, woods and grasses were more in my way, and with rare delicacy he never talked on books at all, but led out at once, whenever possible, to our mutual friends in the rear of the old Headquarters of Washington.

It was on this occasion that a pall of black suddenly fell upon the Republic. Garfield lay dead at Elberon!

A publisher solicited from each of the several authors then in and about Boston some tribute of sorrow for the dead. The generous sum of $100 was checked as an earnest. I remember how John Boyle O'Reilly and I went to big-hearted Walt Whitman and wrestled with him in a vain effort to make him earn and accept his $100.

"Yes, I'm sorry as the sorriest; sympathize with the great broken heart of the world over this dead sovereign citizen. But I've nothing to say."

And so, persuade as we might, even till past midnight, Walt Whitman would not touch the money or try to write a line. He was poor; but bear it forever in testimony that he was honest, and would not promise to sell that which he felt that God had not at that moment given him to sell. And hereafter, whenever any of you are disposed to speak or even think unkindly of Walt Whitman, remember this refusal of his to touch a whole heap of money when he might have had it for ten lines, and maybe less than ten minutes' employment. I love him for it. There is not a butcher, nor a baker, nor a merchant, nor a banker in America, perhaps, who would have been, under the circumstances, so stubbornly, savagely honest with the world and himself.

Early next morning I went to Mr. Longfellow in great haste and read my lines. Kindly he listened as I read, and then carefully looked them all over and made some important improvements. He had also partly written, and read me, his poem on the sad theme. But it was too stately and fine for company with our less mature work, and at the last moment it was withheld on the plea that it was still incomplete. It soon after appeared in the New York *Independent*. As I was hastening away with my manuscript for the press, he said as he came with me down to the gate, that the Queen of England had done more to conquer America by sending the wreath for the funeral of the dead President than all the Georges had ever done with all their troops and cannon. And he said it in such a poetical way that I thought it an unfinished couplet of his poem. I never saw him any more.

HE LOVES AND RIDES AWAY

A fig for her story of shame and of pride!
She strayed in the night and her feet fell astray;
The great Mississippi was glad that day,
And that is the reason the poor girl died;
The great Mississippi was glad, I say,
And splendid with strength in his fierce, full pride—
And that is the reason the poor girl died.

And that was the reason, from first to last;
Down under the dark, still cypresses there.
The Father of Waters he held her fast.
He kissed her face, he fondled her hair,
No more, no more an unloved outcast,
He clasped her close to his great, strong breast,
Brave lover that loved her last and best:

Around and around in her watery world,
Down under the boughs where the bank was steep,
And cypress trees kneeled all gnarly and curled,
Where woods were dark as the waters were deep,
Where strong, swift waters were swept and swirled,
Where the whirlpool sobbed and sucked in its breath,
As some great monster that is choking to death:

Where sweeping and swirling around and around
That whirlpool eddied so dark and so deep
That even a populous world might have drowned,

So surging, so vast and so swift its sweep—
She rode on the wave. And the trees that weep,
The solemn gray cypresses leaning o'er;
The roots that ran blood as they leaned from the shore!

She surely was drowned! But she should have lain still;
She should have lain dead as the dead under ground;
She should have kept still as the dead on the hill!
But ever and ever she eddied around,
And so nearer and nearer she drew me there
Till her eyes met mine in their cold dead stare.

Then she looked, and she looked as to look me through;
And she came so close to my feet on the shore;
And her large eyes, larger than ever before,
They never grew weary as dead men's do.
And her hair! as long as the moss that swept
From the cypress trees as they leaned and wept.

Then the moon rose up, and she came to see,
Her long white fingers slow pointing there;
Why, shoulder to shoulder the moon with me
On the bank that night, with her shoulders bare,
Slow pointing and pointing that white face out,
As it swirled and it swirled, and it swirled about.

There ever and ever, around and around,
Those great sad eyes that refused to sleep!
Reproachful sad eyes that had ceased to weep!

And the great whirlpool with its gurgling sound!
The reproachful dead that was not yet dead!
The long strong hair from that shapely head!

Her hair was so long! so marvelous long,
As she rode and she rode on that whirlpool's breast;
And she rode so swift, and she rode so strong,
Never to rest as the dead should rest.
Oh, tell me true, could her hair in the wave
Have grown, as grow dead men's in the grave?

For, hist! I have heard that a virgin's hair
Will grow in the grave of a virgin true,
Will grow and grow in the coffin there,
Till head and foot it is filled with hair
All silken and soft—but what say you?
Yea, tell me truly can this be true?

For oh, her hair was so strangely long
That it bound her about like a veil of night,
With only her pitiful face in sight!
As she rode so swift, and she rode so strong,
That it wrapped her about, as a shroud had done,
A shroud, a coffin, and a veil in one.

And oh, that ride on the whirling tide!
That whirling and whirling it is in my head,
For the eyes of my dead they are not yet dead,
Though surely the lady had long since died:
Then the mourning wood by the watery grave;
The moon's white face to the face in the wave.

That moon I shall hate! For she left her
place
Unasked up in heaven to show me that face.
I shall hate forever the sounding tide;
For oh, that swirling it is in my head
As it swept and it swirled with my dead not
dead,
As it gasped and it sobbed as a God that had
died.

AFTER THE BATTLE

Sing banners and cannon and roll of drum!
The shouting of men and the marshaling!
Lo! cannon to cannon and earth struck dumb!
Oh, battle, in song, is a glorious thing!

Oh, glorious day, riding down to the fight!
Oh, glorious battle in story and song!
Oh, godlike man to die for the right!
Oh, manlike God to revenge the wrong!

Yea, riding to battle, on battle day—
Why, a soldier is something more than a king!
But after the battle! The riding away!
Ah, the riding away is another thing!

THOSE PERILOUS SPANISH EYES

Some fragrant trees,
Some flower-sown seas
Where boats go up and down,
And a sense of rest
To the tired breast
In this beauteous Aztec town.

But the terrible thing in this Aztec town
That will blow men's rest to the stormiest skies,
Or whether they journey or they lie down—
Those perilous Spanish eyes!

Snow walls without,
Drawn sharp about
To prop the sapphire skies!
Two huge gate posts,
Snow-white like ghosts—
Gate posts to paradise!

But, oh! turn back from the high-walled town!
There is trouble enough in this world, I surmise,
Without men riding in regiments down—
Oh, perilous Spanish eyes!

MEXICO CITY, 1880.

NEWPORT NEWS

The huge sea monster, the "Merrimac";
The mad sea monster, the "Monitor";
You may sweep the sea, peer forward and back,
But never a sign or a sound of war.
A vulture or two in the heavens blue;
A sweet town building, a boatman's call:
The far sea-song of a pleasure crew;
The sound of hammers. And that is all.

And where are the monsters that tore this main?
And where are the monsters that shook this shore?
The sea grew mad! And the shore shot flame!
The mad sea monsters they are no more.
The palm, and the pine, and the sea sands brown;
The far sea songs of the pleasure crews;
The air like balm in this building town—
And that is the picture of Newport News.

THE COMING OF SPRING

My own and my only Love some night
Shall keep her tryst, shall come from the South,
And oh, her robe of magnolia white!
And oh, and oh, the breath of her mouth!

And oh, her grace in the grasses sweet!
And oh, her love in the leaves new born!
And oh, and oh, her lily-white feet
Set daintily down in the dew-wet morn!

The drowsy cattle at night shall kneel
And give God thanks, and shall dream and rest;
The stars slip down and a golden seal
Be set on the meadows my Love has blest.

Come back, my Love, come sudden, come soon.
The world lies waiting as the cold dead lie;
The frightened winds wail and the crisp-curled moon
Rides, wrapped in clouds, up the cold gray sky.

Oh, Summer, my Love, my first, last Love!
I sit all day by Potomac here,
Waiting and waiting the voice of the dove;
Waiting my darling, my own, my dear.

THE CABIN, Washington, D. C.

CHRISTMAS BY THE GREAT RIVER

Oh, lion of the ample earth,
What sword can cleave thy sinews through?
The south forever cradles you;
And yet the great North gives you birth.

Go find an arm so strong, so sure,
Go forge a sword so keen, so true,
That it can thrust thy bosom through;
Then may this union not endure!

In orange lands I lean today
Against thy warm tremendous mouth,
Oh, tawny lion of the South,
To hear what story you shall say.

What story of the stormy North,
Of frost-bound homes, of babes at play—
What tales of twenty States the day
You left your lair and leapt forth:

The day you tore the mountain's breast
And in the icy North uprose,
And shook your sides of rains and snows,
And rushed against the South to rest:

Oh, tawny river, what of they,
The far North folk? The maiden sweet—
The ardent lover at her feet—
What story of thy States today!

* * * * * *

The river kissed my garment's hem,
And whispered as it swept away:
"God's story in all States today
Is of a babe of Bethlehem."

THOMAS OF TIGRE*

King of Tigre, comrade true
Where in all thine isles art thou?
Sailing on Fonseca blue?
Nearing Amapala now?
King of Tigre, where art thou?

Battling for Antilles' queen?
Saber hilt, or olive bough?
Crown of dust, or laurel green?
Roving love, or marriage vow?
King and comrade, where art thou?

Sailing on Pacific seas?
Pitching tent in Pimo now?
Underneath magnolia trees?
Thatch of palm, or cedar bough?
Soldier singer, where art thou?

Coasting on the Oregon?
Saddle bow, or birchen prow?
Round the Isles of Amazon?
Pampas, plain, or mountain brow?
Prince of rovers, where art thou?

* This was a brave old boyhood friend in the Mount Shasta Days. You will find him there as the Prince in my "Life Among the Modocs," "Unwritten History, Paquita," "My Life Among the Indians," "My Own Story," or whatever other name enterprising or piratical publishers, Europe or America, may have chosen to give the one prose book Mulford and I put out in London during the Modoc war. This man, Prince Thomas, now of Leon, Nicaragua, was a great favorite and my best friend, in one sense for years in Europe. He had passed the most adventurous life conceivable, at one time having been king of an island. He gloried in the story of his wild life, spent

money like a real prince, and was the envy and admiration of fashionable club men.

"Where in all the world, and when, did he get so much money?" once asked the president of the Savage Club.

"Well, I am not certain whether it was as a pirate of the South Seas or merely as a brigand of Mexico," I answered.

This answer coming to the ears of Thomas, he so far from being angered was greatly pleased and laughed heartily over it with some friends at Lord Houghton's table.

THE QUEEN OF MY DREAMS

I dream'd, O Queen, of you, last night;
I can but dream of thee today.
But dream? Oh! I could kneel and pray
To one, who, like a tender light,
Leads ever on my lonesome way,
And will not pass—yet will not stay.

I dream'd we roam'd in elden land;
I saw you walk in splendid state,
With lifted head and heart elate,
And lilies in your white right hand,
Beneath your proud Saint Peter's dome
That, silent, lords almighty Rome.

A diamond star was in your hair,
Your garments were of gold and snow;
And men did turn and marvel so,
And men did say, How matchless fair!
And all men follow'd as you pass'd;
But I came silent, lone, and last.

And holy men in sable gown,
And girt with cord, and sandal shod,
Did look to thee, and then to God.
They cross'd themselves, with heads held down;
They chid themselves, for fear that they
Should, seeing thee, forget to pray.

Men pass'd, men spake in wooing word;
Men pass'd, ten thousand in a line.
You stood before the sacred shrine,
You stood as if you had not heard.

And then you turn'd in calm command,
And laid two lilies in my hand.

O Lady, if by sea or land
You yet might weary of all men,
And turn unto your singer then,
And lay one lily in his hand,
Lo! I would follow true and far
As seamen track the polar star.

My soul is young, my heart is strong;
O Lady, reach a hand today,
And thou shalt walk the milky way,
For I will give thy name to song.
Yea, I am of the kings of thought,
And thou shalt live when kings are not.

THE POET

Yes, I am a dreamer. Yet while you dream,
Then I am awake. When a child, back through
The gates of the past I peer'd, and I knew
The land I had lived in. I saw a broad stream,
Saw rainbows that compass'd a world in their
reach;
I saw my belovéd go down on the beach;
Saw her lean to this earth, saw her looking for
me
As shipmen looked for loved ship at sea. . . .
While you seek gold in the earth, why, I
See gold in the steeps of the starry sky;
And which do you think has the fairer view
Of God in heaven—the dreamer or you?

LINCOLN PARK

Unwalled it lies, and open as the sun
When God swings wide the dark doors of the
East.
Oh, keep this one spot, still this one,
Where tramp or banker, laymen or high priest,
May equal meet before the face of God:
Yea, equals stand upon that common sod
Where they shall one day equals be
Beneath, for aye, and all eternity.

THE RIVER OF REST

A beautiful stream is the River of Rest;
The still, wide waters sweep clear and cold,
A tall mast crosses a star in the west,
A white sail gleams in the west world's gold:
It leans to the shore of the River of Rest—
The lily-lined shore of the River of Rest.

The boatman rises, he reaches a hand,
He knows you well, he will steer you true,
And far, so far, from all ills upon land,
From hates, from fates that pursue and pursue;
Far over the lily-lined River of Rest—
Dear mystical, magical River of Rest.

A storied, sweet stream is this River of Rest;
The souls of all time keep its ultimate shore;
And journey you east or journey you west,
Unwilling, or willing, sure footed or sore,
You surely will come to this River of Rest—
This beautiful, beautiful River of Rest.

THE NEW PRESIDENT

Granite and marble and granite,
Corridor, column and dome!
A capitol huge as a planet
And massive as marble-built Rome.

Stair steps of granite to glory!
Go up with thy face to the sun;
They are stained with the footsteps and
story
Of giants and battles well won.

Stop—stand on this stairway of granite,
Lo! Arlington, storied and still,
With a lullaby hush. But the land it
Springs fresh as that sun-fronted hill.

Beneath us stout-hearted Potomac
In majesty moves to the sea—
Beneath us a sea of proud people
Moves on, undivided as he.

Yea, strife it is over and ended
For all the days under the sun;
The banners unite and are blended
As moonlight and sunlight in one.

Lo! banners and banners and banners,
Broad star-balanced banners of blue—
If a single star fell from fair heaven,
Why, what would befall us think you?

MONTGOMERY AT QUEBEC

Sword in hand he was slain;
The snow his winding sheet;
The grinding ice at his feet—
The river moaning in pain.

Pity and peace at last;
Flowers for him today
Above on the battlements gray—
And the river rolling past.

AFRICA

Oh! she is very old. I lay,
Made dumb with awe and wonderment,
Beneath a palm before my tent,
With idle and discouraged hands,
Not many days ago, on sands
Of awful, silent Africa.
Long gazing on her ghostly shades,
That lift their bare arms in the air,
I lay. I mused where story fades
From her dark brow and found her fair.

A slave, and old, within her veins
There runs that warm, forbidden blood
That no man dares to dignify
In elevated song. The chains
That held her race but yesterday
Hold still the hands of men. Forbid
Is Ethiop. The turbid flood
Of prejudice lies stagnant still,
And all the world is tainted. Will
And wit lie broken as a lance
Against the brazen mailéd face
Of old opinion. None advance,
Steel-clad and glad, to the attack,
With trumpet and with song. Look back!
Beneath yon pyramids lie hid
The histories of her great race. . . .
Old Nilus rolls right sullen by,
With all his secrets. Who shall say:
My father rear'd a pyramid;
My brother clipp'd the dragon's wings;
My mother was Semiramis?
Yea, harps strike idly out of place;

Men sing of savage Saxon kings
New-born and known but yesterday,
And Norman blood presumes to say. . .

Nay, ye who boast ancestral name
And vaunt deeds dignified by time
Must not despise her. Who hath worn
Since time began a face that is
So all-enduring, old like this—
A face like Africa's? Behold!
The Sphinx is Africa. The bond
Of silence is upon her. Old
And white with tombs, and rent and shorn;
With raiment wet with tears, and torn,
And trampled on, yet all untamed;
All naked now, yet not ashamed,—
The mistress of the young world's prime,
Whose obelisks still laugh at time,
And lift to heaven her fair name,
Sleeps satisfied upon her fame.

Beyond the Sphinx, and still beyond,
Beyond the tawny desert-tomb
Of Time; beyond tradition, loom
And lifts, ghost-like, from out the gloom,
Her thousand cities, battle-torn
And gray with story and with Time.
Her humblest ruins are sublime;
Her thrones with mosses overborne
Make velvets for the feet of Time.

She points a hand and cries: "Go read
The letter'd obelisks that lord
Old Rome, and know my name and deed.

My archives these, and plunder'd when
I had grown weary of all men."
We turn to these; we cry: "Abhorr'd
Old Sphinx, behold, we cannot read!"

SUMMER MOONS AT MOUNT VERNON

Such musky smell of maiden night!
Such bridal bough, like orange tree!
Such wondrous stars! Yon lily moon
Seems like some long-lost afternoon!

More perfect than a string of pearls
We hold the full days of the year;
The days troop by like flower girls,
And all the days are ours here.
Here youth must learn; here age may live
Full tide each day the year can give.

No frosted wall, no frozen hasp,
Shuts Nature's book from us today;
Her palm leaves lift too high to clasp;
Her college walls, the milky way.
The light is with us! Read and lead!
The larger book, the loftier deed!

THE POEM BY THE POTOMAC*

Paine! The Prison of France! Lafayette!
The Bastile key to our Washington,
Whose feet on the neck of tyrants set
Shattered their prisons every one.
The key hangs here on his white walls high,
That all shall see, that none shall forget
What tyrants have been, what they may be yet;
And the Potomac rolling by.

On Washington's walls let it rust and rust,
And tell its story of blood and of tears,
That Time still holds to the Poet's trust,
To people his pages for years and years.
The monstrous shape on the white walls high,
Like a thief in chains let it rot and rust—
Its kings and adorers crowned in dust:
And the Potomac rolling by.

* Two or three hundred steps to the right and up a general incline and you stand on the broad, high porch of Mount Vernon.

A great river creeps close underneath one hundred feet below. You might suppose you could throw a stone, standing on the porch, into the Potomac as seen through the trees that hug the hillside and the water's bank below. All was quiet, so quiet. Now and then a barnyard fowl, back in the rear, strained his glossy neck and called out loud and clear in the eternal Sabbath here; a fine shaggy dog wallowed and romped about the grassy dooryard, while far out over the vast river some black, wide-winged birds kept circling round and round. I went back and around into the barnyard to inquire what kind of birds they were. I met a very respectful but very stammery negro here. He took his cap in his hand, and twisting it all about and opening his mouth many times, he finally said:

"Do-do-dose burds was created by de Lord to p-p-pu-purify de yearth."

"But what do you call them, uncle?"

"Tur-tur-tur," and he twisted his cap, backed out, came forward, winked his eyes, but could not go on.

"Do you mean turkey buzzards?"

"Ya-ya-yas, sah, do-do-dose burds eats up de carrion ob de yearth, sah."

Down yonder is the tomb, the family vault. Back in the rear of the two marble coffins about thirty of the Washington family lie. The vault is locked up and closed forever. The key has been thrown into the trusty old Potomac to lie there until the last trump shall open all tombs.

Let no one hereafter complain of having to live in a garret alone and without a fire. For here, with all this spacious and noble house to select from, the widow of Washington chose a garret looking to the south and out upon his tomb. This is the old tomb where he was first laid to rest and where the fallen oak leaves are crowding in heaps now and almost filling up the low, dark doorway.

This garret has but one window, a small and narrow dormer window, and is otherwise quite dark. A bottom corner of the door is cut away so that her cat might come and go at will. And this is the saddest, tenderest sight at Mount Vernon. It seemed to me that I could see this noble lady sitting here, looking out upon the tomb of her mighty dead, the great river sweeping fast beyond, her heart full of the memory of a mighty Nation's birth, waiting, waiting, waiting.

The thing, however, of the most singular interest here is a key of the Bastile, presented by Thomas Paine to Lafayette, who brought it to America and presented it to Mount Vernon. It hangs here in a glass case, massive and monstrous. It is a hideous, horrible thing, and has, perhaps, more blood and misery on it than ony other piece of iron or steel that was ever seen.

A DEAD CARPENTER

What shall be said of this soldier now dead?
This builder, this brother, now resting forever?
What shall be said of this soldier who bled
Through thirty-three years of silent endeavor?

Why, name him thy hero! Yea, write his name down
As something far nobler, as braver by far
Than purple-robed Cæsar of battle-torn town
When bringing home glittering trophies of war.

Oh, dark somber pines of my starlit Sierras,
Be silent of song, for the master is mute!
The Carpenter, master, is dead and lo! there is
Silence of song upon nature's draped lute!

Brother! Oh, manly dead brother of mine!
My brother by toil 'mid the toiling and lowly,
My brother by sign of this hard hand, by sign
Of toil, and hard toil, that the Christ has made holy:

Yea, brother of all the brave millions that toil;
Brave brother in patience and silent endeavor,
Rest on, as the harvester rich from his soil,
Rest you, and rest you for ever and ever.

QUESTION?

In the days when my mother, the Earth, was young,
And you all were not, nor the likeness of you,
She walk'd in her maidenly prime among
The moonlit stars in the boundless blue.

Then the great sun lifted his shining shield,
And he flash'd his sword as the soldiers do,
And he moved like a king full over the field,
And he looked, and he loved her brave and true.

And looking afar from the ultimate rim,
As he lay at rest in a reach of light,
He beheld her walking alone at night,
When the buttercup stars in their beauty swim.

So he rose up flush'd in his love, and he ran,
And he reach'd his arms, and around her waist
He wound them strong like a love-struck man,
And he kiss'd and embraced her, brave and chaste.

So he nursed his love like a babe at its birth,
And he warm'd in his love as the long years ran,
Then embraced her again, and sweet mother Earth
Was a mother indeed, and her child was man.

The sun is the sire, the mother is earth!
What more do you know? what more do I need?

The one he begot, and the one gave birth,
And I love them both, and let laugh at your creed.

And who shall say I am all unwise
In my great, warm faith? Time answers us not:
The quick fool questions; but who replies?
The wise man hesitates, hushed in thought.

BOSTON TO THE BOERS*

"For the right that needs assistance,
For the wrong that needs resistance,
For the glory in the distance,
For the good that we can do."

"For Freedom's battles once begun,
Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, are ever won."—BYRON.

The Sword of Gideon, Sword of God,
Be with ye, Boers. Brave men of peace,
Ye hewed the path, ye brake the sod,
Ye fed white flocks of fat increase,
Where Saxon foot had never trod;
Where Saxon foot unto this day
Had measured not, had never known,
Had ye not bravely led the way
And made such happy homes your own.

I think God's house must be such home.
The priestess Mother, choristers
Who spin and weave, nor care to roam
Beyond this white God's house of hers,
But spinning sing and spin again.
I think such silent shepherd men
Most like that few the prophet sings—
Most like that few stout Abram drew
Triumphant o'er the slaughtered kings.

Defend God's house! Let fall the crook.
Draw forth the plowshare from the sod,
And trust, as in the Holy Book,
The Sword of Gideon and of God;
God and the right! Enough to fight

A million regiments of wrong.
Defend! Nor count what comes of it.
God's battle bides not with the strong;
And pride must fall. Lo! it is writ!

Great England's Gold! how stanch she fares,
Fame's wine-cup pressing her proud lips—
Her checker-board of battle squares
Rimmed round by steel-built battle-ships!
And yet meanwhiles ten thousand miles
She seeks ye out. Well, welcome her!
Give her such welcome with such will
As Boston gave in battle's whir
That red, dread day at Bunker Hill.

* My first, best friends were British. They still are, and so far from finding fault that I favor the Boers, they exult that I dare for the right. They are the better class of British. England's best friends to-day are those who deplore this assault on the farmer Boers, so like ourselves a century back. Could any man be found strong enough to stay her hand, with sword or pen, in this mad hour, that man would deserve her lasting gratitude. This feeling holds in England as well as here. Take for example the following from her ablest thinker to a friend in America:—

"I rejoice that you and others are bent on showing that there are some among us who think the national honor is not being enhanced by putting down the weak. Would that age and ill health did not prevent me from aiding. No one can deny that at the time of the Jameson Raid the aim of the Outlanders and the raiders was to usurp the Transvaal government, and he must be willfully blind who does not see what the Outlanders failed to do by bullets they hope presently to do by votes, and only those who, while jealous of their own independence, regard but little the independence of people who stand in their way, can fail to sympathize with the Boers in their resistance to political extinction. It is sad to see our government backing those whose avowed policy is expansion, which, less politely expressed, means aggression, or which there is a still less polite

word readily guessed. On behalf of these, the big British Empire, weapon in hand, growls out to the little Boer republic, 'Do as I bid you.' I have always thought that nobleness is shown in treating tenderly those who are relatively feeble and even sacrificing on their behalf something to which there is a just claim. But if current opinion is right, I must have been wrong.—HERBERT SPENCER."

ST. PAUL'S

I see above a crowded world a cross
Of gold. It grows like some great cedar tree
Upon a peak in shroud of cloud and moss,
Made bare and bronzed in far antiquity.
Stupendous pile! The grim Yosemite
Has rent apart his granite wall, and thrown
Its rugged front before us. . . . Here I see
The strides of giant men in cryptic stone,
And turn, and slow descend where sleep the great alone.

The mighty captains have come home to rest;
The brave returned to sleep amid the brave.
The sentinel that stood with steely breast
Before the fiery hosts of France, and gave
The battle-cry that roll'd, receding wave
On wave, the foeman flying back and far,
Is here. How still! Yet louder now the grave
Than ever-crashing Belgian battle-car
Or blue and battle-shaken seas of Trafalgar.

The verger stalks in stiff importance o'er
The hollow, deep and strange responding stones;
He stands with lifted staff unchid before
The forms that once had crush'd or fashion'd thrones,
And coldly points you out the coffin'd bones:
He stands composed where armies could not stand
A little time before. . . . The hand disowns
The idle sword, and now instead the grand
And golden cross makes sign and takes austere command.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

The Abbey broods beside the turbid Thames;
Her mother heart is filled with memories;
Her every niche is stored with storied names;
They move before me like a mist of seas.
I am confused, and made abash'd by these
Most kingly souls, grand, silent, and severe.
I am not equal, I should sore displease
The living . . . dead. I dare not enter; drear
And stain'd in storms of grander days all things appear.

I go! but shall I not return again
When art has taught me gentler, kindlier skill,
And time has given force and strength of strain?
I go! O ye that dignify and fill
The chronicles of earth! I would instil
Into my soul somehow the atmosphere
Of sanctity that here usurps the will;
But go; I seek the tomb of one—a peer
Of peers—whose dust a fool refused to cherish here.

AT LORD BYRON'S TOMB

O Master, here I bow before a shrine;
Before the lordliest dust that ever yet
Moved animate in human form divine.
Lo! dust indeed to dust. The mold is set
Above thee and the ancient walls are wet,
And drip all day in dank and silent gloom,
As if the cold gray stones could not forget
Thy great estate shrunk to this somber room,
But lean to weep perpetual tears above thy tomb.

Before me lie the oak-crown'd Annesley hills,
Before me lifts the ancient Annesley Hall
Above the mossy oaks. . . . A picture fills
With forms of other days. A maiden tall
And fair; a fiery restless boy, with all
The force of man! a steed that frets without;
A long thin sword that rusts upon the wall. . . .
The generations pass. . . . Behold! about
The ivied hall the fair-hair'd children sport and shout.

A bay wreath, wound by Ina of the West,
Hangs damp and stain'd upon the dark gray wall,
Above thy time-soil'd tomb and tatter'd crest;
A bay wreath gather'd by the seas that call
To orient Cathay, that break and fall
On shell-lined shores before Tahiti's breeze.
A slab, a crest, a wreath, and these are all
Neglected, tatter'd, torn; yet only these
The world bestows for song that rivall'd singing seas.

A bay-wreath wound by one more truly brave
Than Shastan; fair as thy eternal fame,
She sat and wove above the sunset wave,
And wound and sang thy measures and thy name.
'Twas wound by one, yet sent with one acclaim
By many, fair and warm as flowing wine,
And purely true, and tall as growing flame,
That list and lean in moonlight's mellow shine
To tropic tales of love in other tongues than thine.

I bring this idle reflex of thy task,
And my few loves, to thy forgotten tomb;
I leave them here; and here all pardon ask
Of thee, and patience ask of singers whom
Thy majesty hath silenced. I resume
My staff, and now my face is to the West;
My feet are worn; the sun is gone, a gloom
Has mantled Hucknall, and the minstrel's zest
For fame is broken here, and here he pleads for rest.

ENGLAND

Thou, mother of brave men, of nations! Thou,
The white-brow'd Queen of bold white-bearded Sea!
Thou wert of old ever the same as now,
So strong, so weak, so tame, so fierce, so bound, so free,
A contradiction and a mystery;
Serene, yet passionate, in ways thine own.
Thy brave ships wind and weave earth's destiny.
The zones of earth, aye, thou hast set and sown
All seas in bed of blossom'd sail, as some great garden blown.

RIEL, THE REBEL

He died at dawn in the land of snows;
A priest at the left, a priest at the right;
The doomed man praying for his pitiless foes,
And each priest holding a low dim light,
To pray for the soul of the dying.
But Windsor Castle was far away;
And Windsor Castle was never so gay
With her gorgeous banners flying!

The hero was hung in the windy dawn—
'Twas splendidly done, the telegraph said;
A creak of the neck, then the shoulders drawn;
A heave of the breast—and the man hung dead,
And, oh! never such valiant dying!
While Windsor Castle was far away
With its fops and fools on that windy day,
And its thousand banners flying!

THE DEFENSE OF THE ALAMO

Santa Ana came storming, as a storm might come;
There was rumble of cannon; there was rattle of blade;
There was cavalry, infantry, bugle and drum—
Full seven proud thousand in pomp and parade,
The chivalry, flower of all Mexico;
And a gaunt two hundred in the Alamo!

And thirty lay sick, and some were shot through;
For the siege had been bitter, and bloody, and long.
"Surrender, or die!"—"Men, what will *you* do?"
And Travis, great Travis, drew sword, quick and strong;
Drew a line at his feet. . . . Will you come? Will you go?
I die with my wounded, in the Alamo."

Then Bowie gasped, "Guide me over that line!"
Then Crockett, one hand to the sick, one hand to his gun,
Crossed with him; then never a word or a sign
Till all, sick or well, all, all, save but one,
One man. Then a woman stopped praying, and slow
Across, to die with the heroes of the Alamo.

Then that one coward fled, in the night, in that night
When all men silently prayed and thought

Of home; of tomorrow; of God and the right;
Till dawn; then Travis sent his single last cannon-shot,
In answer to insolent Mexico,
From the old bell-tower of the Alamo.

Then came Santa Ana; a crescent of flame!
Then the red *escalade;* then the fight hand to hand:
Such an unequal fight as never had name
Since the Persian hordes butchered that doomed Spartan band.
All day—all day and all night, and the morning? so slow,
Through the battle smoke mantling the Alamo.

Then silence! Such silence! Two thousand lay dead
In a crescent outside! And within? Not a breath
Save the gasp of a woman, with gory, gashed head,
All alone, with her dead there, waiting for death;
And she but a nurse. Yet when shall we know
Another like this of the Alamo?

Shout "Victory, victory, victory ho!"
I say, 'tis not always with the hosts that win;
I say that the victory, high or low,
Is given the hero who grapples with sin,
Or legion or single; just asking to know
When duty fronts death in his Alamo.

TOMORROW

O thou Tomorrow! Mystery!
O day that ever runs before!
What hast thine hidden hand in store
For mine, Tomorrow, and for me?
O thou Tomorrow! what hast thou
In store to make me bear the Now?

O day in which we shall forget
The tangled troubles of today!
O day that laughs at duns, at debt!
O day of promises to pay!
O shelter from all present storm!
O day in which we shall reform!

O days of all days to reform!
Convenient day of promises!
Hold back the shadow of the storm.
Let not thy mystery be less,
O bless'd Tomorrow! chiefest friend,
But lead us blindfold to the end.

FINALE

Ah me! I mind me long agone,
Once on a savage snow-bound height
We pigmies pierced a king. Upon
His bare and upreared breast till night
We rained red arrows and we rained
Hot lead. Then up the steep and slow
He passed; yet ever still disdained
To strike, or even look below.
We found him, high above the clouds next morn
And dead, in all his silent, splendid scorn.

So leave me, as the edge of night
Comes on a little time to pass,
Or pray. For steep the stony height
And torn by storm, and bare of grass
Or blossom. And when I lie dead
Oh, do not drag me down once more.
For Jesus' sake let my poor head
Lie pillowed with these stones. My store
Of wealth is these. I earned them. Let me
keep
Still on alone, on mine own star-lit steep.

TO JUANITA

You will come my bird, Bonita?
Come! For I by steep and stone
Have built such nest for you, Juanita,
As not eagle bird hath known.

Rugged! Rugged as Parnassus!
Rude, as all roads I have trod—
Yet are steeps and stone-strewn passes
Smooth o'er head, and nearest God.

Here black thunders of my cañon
Shake its walls in Titan wars!
Here white sea-born clouds companion
With such peaks as know the stars!

Here madrona, manzanita—
Here the snarling chaparral
House and hang o'er steeps, Juanita,
Where the gaunt wolf loved to dwell!

Dear, I took these trackless masses
Fresh from Him who fashioned them;
Wrought in rock, and hewed fair passes,
Flower set, as sets a gem.

Aye, I built in woe. God willed it;
Woe that passeth ghosts of guilt;
Yet I built as His birds builded —
Builded, singing as I built.

All is finished! Roads of flowers
Wait your loyal little feet.

All completed? Nay, the hours
Till you come are incomplete.

Steep below me lies the valley,
Deep below me lies the town,
Where great sea-ships ride and rally,
And the world walks up and down.

O, the sea of lights far streaming
When the thousand flags are furled—
When the gleaming bay lies dreaming
As it duplicates the world!

You will come, my dearest, truest?
Come my sovereign queen of ten;
My blue skies will then be bluest;
My white rose be whitest then:

Then the song! Ah, then the saber
Flashing up the walls of night!
Hate of wrong and love of neighbor—
Rhymes of battle for the Right!

THE HIGHTS, CAL.

SEMI-HUMOROUS SONGS*

IN CLASSIC SHADES

Alone and sad I sat me down
To rest on Rousseau's narrow isle
Below Geneva. Mile on mile,
And set with many a shining town,
Tow'rd Dent du Midi danced the wave
Beneath the moon. Winds went and came
And fanned the stars into a flame.
I heard the far lake, dark and deep,
Rise up and talk as in its sleep;
I heard the laughing waters lave
And lap against the further shore,
An idle oar, and nothing more
Save that the isle had voice, and save
That 'round about its base of stone
There plashed and flashed the foamy Rhone.

A stately man, as black as tan,
Kept up a stern and broken round
Among the strangers on the ground.
I named that awful African
A second Hannibal.

I gat
My elbows on the table; sat
With chin in upturned palm to scan
His face, and contemplate the scene.
The moon rode by, a crownéd queen.
I was alone. Lo! not a man
To speak my mother tongue. Ah me!
How more than all alone can be
A man in crowds! Across the isle
My Hannibal strode on. The while

Diminished Rousseau sat his throne
Of books, unnoticed and unknown.

This strange, strong man, with face austere,
At last drew near. He bowed; he spake
In unknown tongues. I could but shake
My head. Then half achill with fear,
Arose, and sought another place.
Again I mused. The kings of thought
Came by, and on that storied spot
I lifted up a tearful face.
The star-set Alps they sang a tune
Unheard by any soul save mine.
Mont Blanc, as lone and as divine
And white, seemed mated to the moon.
The past was mine; strong-voiced and vast—
Stern Calvin, strange Voltaire, and Tell,
And two whose names are known too well
To name, in grand procession passed.

And yet again came Hannibal;
King-like he came, and drawing near,
I saw his brow was now severe
And resolute.

In tongue unknown
Again he spake. I was alone,
Was all unarmed; was worn and sad;
But now, at last, my spirit had
Its old assertion.

I arose,
As startled from a dull repose;
With gathered strength I raised a hand
And cried, "I do not understand."

His black face brightened as I spake;
He bowed; he wagged his woolly head;
He showed his shining teeth, and said,
"Sah, if you please, dose tables heah
Am consecrate to lager beer;
And, sah, what will you have to take?"

Not that I loved that colored cuss—
Nay! he had awed me all too much—
But I sprang forth, and with a clutch
I grasped his hand, and holding thus,
Cried, "Bring my country's drink for two!"
For oh! that speech of Saxon sound
To me was as a fountain found
In wastes, and thrilled me through and through.

* * * * * *

On Rousseau's isle, in Rousseau's shade,
Two pink and spicy drinks were made,
In classic shades, on classic ground,
We stirred two cocktails round and round.

* The dower of song is, to my mind, a sacred gift. The prophet and the seer should rise above the levities of this life. And so it is that I make humble apology for now gathering up from recitation books these next half dozen pieces. The only excuse for doing it is their refusal to die; even under the mutilations of the compilers of "choice selections."

THAT GENTLE MAN FROM BOSTON

AN IDYL OF OREGON

Two noble brothers loved a fair
Young lady, rich and good to see;
And oh, her black abundant hair!
And oh, her wondrous witchery!
Her father kept a cattle farm,
These brothers kept her safe from harm:

From harm of cattle on the hill;
From thick-necked bulls loud bellowing
The livelong morning, long and shrill,
And lashing sides like anything!
From roaring bulls that tossed the sand
And pawed the lilies of the land.

There came a third young man. He came
From far and famous Boston town.
He was not handsome, was not "game,"
But he could "cook a goose" as brown
As any man that set foot on
The mist kissed shores of Oregon.

This Boston man he taught the school,
Taught gentleness and love alway,
Said love and kindness, as a rule,
Would ultimately "make it pay."
He was so gentle, kind, that he
Could make a noun and verb agree.

So when one day these brothers grew
All jealous and did strip to fight,
He gently stood between the two

And meekly told them 'twas not right.
"I have a higher, better plan,"
Outspake this gentle Boston man.

"My plan is this: Forget this fray
About that lily hand of hers;
Go take your guns and hunt all day
High up yon lofty hill of firs,
And while you hunt, my ruffled doves,
Why, I will learn which one she loves."

The brothers sat the windy hill,
Their hair shone yellow, like spun gold,
Their rifles crossed their laps, but still
They sat and sighed and shook with cold.
Their hearts lay bleeding far below;
Above them gleamed white peaks of snow.

Their hounds lay crouching slim and neat,
A spotted circle in the grass.
The valley lay beneath their feet;
They heard the wide-winged eagles pass.
Two eagles cleft the clouds above;
Yet what could they but sigh and love?

"If I could die," the elder sighed,
"My dear young brother here might wed."
"Oh, would to heaven I had died!"
The younger sighed with bended head.
Then each looked each full in the face
And each sprang up and stood in place.

"If I could die"—the elder spake,—
"Die by your hand, the world would say
'Twas accident—; and for her sake,

Dear brother, be it so, I pray."
"Not that!" the younger nobly said;
Then tossed his gun and turned his head.

And fifty paces back he paced!
And as he paced he drew the ball;
Then sudden stopped and wheeled and faced
His brother to the death and fall!
Two shots rang wild upon the air!
But lo! the two stood harmless there!

Two eagles poised high in the air;
Far, far below the bellowing
Of bullocks ceased, and everywhere
Vast silence sat all questioning.
The spotted hounds ran circling round,
Their red, wet noses to the ground.

And now each brother came to know
That each had drawn the deadly ball;
And for that fair girl far below
Had sought in vain to silent fall.
And then the two did gladly "shake,"
And thus the elder gravely spake:

"Now let us run right hastily
And tell the kind schoolmaster all!
Yea! yea! and if she choose not me,
But all on you her favors fall,
This valiant scene, till all life ends,
Dear brother, binds us best of friends.

The hounds sped down, a spotted line,
The bulls in tall abundant grass
Shook back their horns from bloom and vine,

And trumpeted to see them pass—
They loved so good, they loved so true,
These brothers scarce knew what to do.

They sought the kind schoolmaster out
As swift as sweeps the light of morn—
They could but love, they could not doubt
This man so gentle, "in a horn,"
They cried: "Now whose the lily hand—
That lady's of this emer'ld land?"

They bowed before that big-nosed man,
That long-nosed man from Boston town;
They talked as only lovers can,
They talked, but he would only frown;
And still they talked and still they plead;
It was as pleading with the dead.

At last this Boston man did speak—
"Her father has a thousand ceows,
An hundred bulls, all fat and sleek;
He also had this ample heouse."
The brothers' eyes stuck out thereat
So far you might have hung your hat.

"I liked the looks of this big heouse—
My lovely boys, won't you come in?
Her father had a thousand ceows—
He also had a heap o' tin.
The guirl? Oh yes, the guirl, you see—
The guirl, this morning married me."

WILLIAM BROWN OF OREGON

They called him Bill, the hired man,
But she, her name was Mary Jane,
The squire's daughter; and to reign
The belle from Ber-she-be to Dan
Her little game. How lovers rash
Got mittens at the spelling school!
How many a mute, inglorious fool
Wrote rhymes and sighed and dyed—mustache?

This hired man had loved her long,
Had loved her best and first and last,
Her very garments as she passed
For him had symphony and song.
So when one day with flirt and frown
She called him "Bill," he raised his head,
He caught her eye and faltering said,
"I love you; and my name is Brown,"

She fairly waltzed with rage; she wept;
You would have thought the house on fire.
She told her sire, the portly squire,
Then smelt her smelling-salts and slept.
Poor William did what could be done;
He swung a pistol on each hip,
He gathered up a great ox-whip
And drove right for the setting sun.

He crossed the big backbone of earth,
He saw the snowy mountains rolled
Like mighty billows; saw the gold
Of great big sunsets; felt the birth
Of sudden dawn upon the plain;
And every night did William Brown

Eat pork and beans and then lie down
And dream sweet dreams of Mary Jane.

Her lovers passed. Wolves hunt in packs,
They sought for bigger game; somehow
They seemed to see about her brow
The forky signs of turkey tracks.
The teter-board of life goes up,
The teter-board of life goes down,
The sweetest face must learn to frown;
The biggest dog has been a pup.

O maidens! pluck not at the air;
The sweetest flowers I have found
Grow rather close unto the ground
And highest places are most bare.
Why, you had better win the grace
Of one poor cussed Af-ri-can
Than win the eyes of every man
In love alone with his own face.

At last she nursed her true desire.
She sighed, she wept for William Brown.
She watched the splendid sun go down
Like some great sailing ship on fire,
Then rose and checked her trunks right on;
And in the cars she lunched and lunched,
And had her ticket punched and punched,
Until she came to Oregon.

She reached the limit of the lines,
She wore blue specs upon her nose,
Wore rather short and manly clothes,
And so set out to reach the mines.
Her right hand held a Testament,

Her pocket held a parasol,
And thus equipped right on she went,
Went water-proof and water-fall.

She saw a miner gazing down,
Slow stirring something with a spoon;
"O, tell me true and tell me soon,
What has become of William Brown?"
He looked askance beneath her specs,
Then stirred his cocktail round and round,
Then raised his head and sighed profound,
And said, "He's handed in his checks."

Then care fed on her damaged cheek,
And she grew faint, did Mary Jane,
And smelt her smelling salts in vain,
Yet wandered on, way-worn and weak.
At last upon a hill alone;
She came, and there she sat her down;
For on that hill there stood a stone,
And, lo! that stone read, "William Brown."

"O William Brown! O William Brown!
And here you rest at last," she said,
"With this lone stone above your head,
And forty miles from any town!
I will plant cypress trees, I will,
And I will build a fence around,
And I will fertilize the ground
With tears enough to turn a mill."

She went and got a hired man,
She brought him forty miles from town,
And in the tall grass squatted down
And bade him build as she should plan.

But cruel cowboys with their bands
They saw, and hurriedly they ran
And told a bearded cattle man
Somebody builded on his lands.

He took his rifle from the rack,
He girt himself in battle pelt,
He stuck two pistols in his belt,
And mounting on his horse's back,
He plunged ahead. But when they shewed
A woman fair, about his eyes
He pulled his hat, and he likewise
Pulled at his beard, and chewed and chewed.

At last he gat him down and spake:
"O lady, dear, what do you here?"
"I build a tomb unto my dear,
I plant sweet flowers for his sake."
The bearded man threw his two hands
Above his head, then brought them down
And cried, "O, I am William Brown,
And this the corner-stone of my lands!"

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* * * * * *
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And the Prince married her and they lived happy ever after.

HORACE GREELEY'S DRIVE

The old stage-drivers of the brave old days!
The old stage-drivers with their dash and trust!
These old stage-drivers they have gone their ways
But their deeds live on, though their bones are dust;
And many brave tales are told and retold
Of these daring men in the days of old:

Of honest Hank Monk and his Tally-Ho,
When he took good Horace in his stage to climb
The high Sierras with their peaks of snow
And 'cross to Nevada, "and come in on time;"
But the canyon below was so deep—oh! so deep—
And the summit above was so steep—oh! so steep!

The horses were foaming. The summit ahead
Seemed as far as the stars on a still, clear night.
And steeper and steeper the narrow route led
Till up to the peaks of perpetual white;
But faithful Hank Monk, with his face to the snow,
Sat silent and stern on his Tally-Ho!

Sat steady and still, sat faithful and true
To the great, good man in his charge that day;
Sat vowing the man and the mail should "go through
On time" though he bursted both brace and stay;
Sat silently vowing, in face of the snow,
He'd "get in on time" with his Tally-Ho!

But the way was so steep and so slow—oh! so slow!
'T was silver below, and the bright silver peak
Was silver above in its beauty and glow.
An eagle swooped by, Hank saw its hooked beak;
When, sudden out-popping a head snowy white—
"Mr. Monk, I *must* lecture in Nevada tonight!"

With just one thought that the mail must go through;
With just one word to the great, good man—
But weary—so weary—the creaking stage drew
As only a weary old creaking stage can—
When again shot the head; came shrieking outright:
"Mr. Monk, I MUST lecture in Nevada tonight!"

Just then came the summit! And the far world below,
It was Hank Monk's world. But he no word spake;
He pushed back his hat to that fierce peak of snow!
He threw out his foot to the eagle and brake!
He threw out his silk! He threw out his reins!
And the great wheels reeled as if reeling snow skeins!

The eagle was lost in his crag up above!
The horses flew swift as the swift light of morn!
The mail must go through with its message of love,
The miners were waiting his bright bugle horn.

The *man* must go through! And Monk made
a vow
As he never had failed, why, he wouldn't fail
now!

How his stage spun the pines like a far spider's
web!
It was spider and fly in the heavens up there!
And the clanging of hoofs made the blood flow
and ebb,
For 'twas death in the breadth of a wheel or a
hair.
Once more popped the head, and the piping
voice cried:
"Mr. Monk! Mr. Monk!" But no Monk re-
plied!

Then the great stage it swung, as if swung
from the sky;
Then it dipped like a ship in the deep jaws of
death;
Then the good man he gasped as men gasping
for breath,
When they deem it is coming their hour to die.
And again shot the head, like a battering ram,
And the face it was red, and the words they
were hot:
"Mr. Monk! Mr. Monk! I don't care a (mill?)
dam.
Whether I lecture in Nevada or not!"

THAT FAITHFUL WIFE OF IDAHO

Huge silver snow-peaks, white as wool,
Huge, sleek, fat steers knee deep in grass,
And belly deep, and belly full,
Their flower beds one fragrant mass
Of flowers, grass tall-born and grand,
Where flowers chase the flying snow!
Oh, high held land in God's right hand,
Delicious, dreamful Idaho!

We rode the rolling cow-sown hills,
That bearded cattle man and I;
Below us laughed the blossomed rills,
Above the dappled clouds blew by.
We talked. The topic? Guess. Why, sir,
Three-fourths of all men's time they keep
To talk, to think, to *be* of HER;
The other fourth they give to sleep.

To learn what he might know, or how,
I laughed all constancy to scorn.
"Behold yon happy, changeful cow!
Behold this day, all storm at morn,
Yet now 'tis changed by cloud and sun,
Yea, all things change—the heart, the head,
Behold on earth there is not one
That changeth not in love," I said.

He drew a glass, as if to scan
The steeps for steers; raised it and sighed.
He craned his neck, this cattle man,
Then drove the cork home and replied:
"For twenty years (forgive these tears),
For twenty years no word of strife—

I have not known for twenty years
One folly from my faithful wife."

I looked that tarn man in the face—
That dark-browed, bearded cattle man.
He pulled his beard, then dropped in place
A broad right hand, all scarred and tan,
And toyed with something shining there
Above his holster, bright and small.
I was convinced. I did not care
To agitate his mind at all.

But rest I could not. Know I must
The story of my stalwart guide;
His dauntless love, enduring trust;
His blesséd and most wondrous bride.
I wondered, marveled, marveled much;
Was she of Western growth? Was she
Of Saxon blood, that wife with such
Eternal truth and constancy?

I could not rest until I knew—
"Now twenty years, my man," I said,
"Is a long time." He turned, he drew
A pistol forth, also a sigh.
"'Tis twenty years or more," sighed he.
"Nay, nay, my honest man, I vow
I do not doubt that this may be;
But tell, oh! tell me truly how?"

"'Twould make a poem, pure and grand;
All time should note it near and far;
And thy fair, virgin, gold-sown land
Should stand out like some winter star.
America should heed. And then

The doubtful French beyond the sea—
'Twould make them truer, nobler men
To know how this might truly be."

"'Tis twenty years or more, urged he;
"Nay, that I know, good guide of mine;
But lead me where this wife may be,
And I a pilgrim at a shrine,
And kneeling as a pilgrim true"—
He, leaning, shouted loud and clear:
"I cannot show my wife to you;
She's dead this more than twenty year."

SARATOGA AND THE PSALMIST

These famous waters smell like—well,
Those Saratoga waters may
Taste just a little of the day
Of judgment; and the sulphur smell
Suggests, along with other things,
A climate rather warm for springs.

But restful as a twilight song,
The land where every lover hath
A spring, and every spring a path
To lead love pleasantly along.
Oh, there be waters, not of springs—
The waters wise King David sings.

Sweet is the bread that lovers eat
In secret, sang on harp of gold,
Jerusalem's high king of old.
"The stolen waters they are sweet!"
Oh, dear, delicious piracies
Of kisses upon love's high seas!

The old traditions of our race
Repeat for aye and still repeat;
The stolen waters still are sweet
As when King David sat in place,
All purple robed and crowned in gold,
And sang his holy psalms of old.

Oh, to escape the searching sun;
To seek these waters over sweet;
To see her dip her dimpled feet
Where these delicious waters run—

To dip her feet, nor slip nor fall,
Nor stain her garment's hem at all:

Nor soil the whiteness of her feet,
Nor stain her whitest garment's hem—
Oh, singer of Jerusalem,
You sang so sweet, so wisely sweet!
Shake hands! shake hands! I guess you knew
For all your psalms, a thing or two.

A TURKEY HUNT IN TEXAS

(AS TOLD AT DINNER.)

"No, sir; no turkey for me, sir. But soft, place it there,
Lest friends may make question and strangers may stare.
Ah, the thought of that hunt in the cañon, the blood—
Nay, gently, please, gently! You open a flood
Of memories, memories melting me so
That I rise in my place and—excuse me—I go.
No? You must have the story? And you, lady fair?
And you, and you all? Why, it's blood and despair;
And 'twere not kind in me, not manly or wise
To bring tears at such time to such beautiful eyes.

I remember me now the last time I told
This story a Persian in diamonds and gold
Sat next to good Gladstone, there was Wales to the right,
Then a Duke, then an Earl, and such ladies in white!
But I stopped, sudden stopped, lest the story might start
The blood freezing back to each feminine heart.
But they all said, "The story!" just as you all have said,
And the great Persian monarch he nodded his head

Till his diamond-decked feathers fell, glittered and rose,
Then nodded almost to his Ishmaelite nose.

The story! Ah, pardon! 'Twas high Christmas tide
And just beef and beans; yet the land, far and wide,
Was alive with such turkeys of silver and gold,
As never men born to the north may behold.
And Apaches? Aye, Apaches, and they took this game
In a pen, tolled it in. Might not we do the same?
So two of us started, strewing corn, Indian corn,
Tow'rd a great granite gorge with the first flush of morn;
Started gay, laughing back from the broad mesa's breast,
At the bravest of men, who but warned for the best.

We built a great pen from the sweet cedar wood
Tumbled down from a crown where the sentry stars stood.
Scarce done, when the turkeys in line—such a sight!
Picking corn from the sand, russet gold, silver white,
And so fat that they scarcely could waddle or hobble.
And 'twas "Queek, tukee, queek," and 'twas, "gobble and gobble!"

And their great, full crops they did wabble and
wabble
As their bright, high heads they did bob, bow
and bobble,
Down, up, through the trench, crowding up in
the pen.
Now, quick, block the trench! Then the mules
and the men!

Springing forth from our cove, guns leaned
to a rock,
How we laughed! What a feast! We had got
the whole flock.
How we worked till the trench was all blocked
close and tight,
For we hungered, and, too, the near coming of
night,
Then the thought of our welcome. The news?
We could hear
Already, we fancied, the great hearty cheer
As we rushed into camp and exultingly told
Of the mule loads of turkeys in silver and gold.
Then we turned for our guns. Our guns? In
their place
Ten Apaches stood there, and five guns in each
face.

And we stood! we stood straight and stood
strong, track solid to track.
What, turn, try to fly and be shot in the back?
No! We threw hats in the air. We should not
need them more.
And yelled! Yelled as never yelled man or
Comanche before.

We dared them, defied them, right there in their lair.
Why, we leaned to their guns in our splendid despair.
What! spared us for bravery, because we dared death?
You know the tale? Tell it, and spare me my breath.
No, sir. They killed us, killed us both, there and then,
And then nailed our scalps to that turkey pen.

USLAND*

And where lies Usland, Land of Us?
 Where Freedom lives, there Usland lies!
Fling down that map and measure thus
 Or argent seas or sapphire skies:
To north, the North Pole; south, as far
 As ever eagle cleaved his way;
To east, the blazing morning star,
 And west! West to the Judgment Day!

No borrowed lion, rampt in gold;
 No bleeding Erin, plaintive strains;
No starving millions, mute and cold;
 No plundered India, prone in chains;
No peaceful farmer, forced to fly
 Or draw his plowshare from the sod,
And fighting, one to fifty, die
 For freedom, fireside, and God.

Fear not, brave, patient, free-born Boers,
 Great Usland's heart is yours today.
Aye, England's heart of hearts is yours,
 Whatever scheming men may say.
Her scheming men have mines to sell,
 And we? Why, meat and corn and wheat.
But, Boers, all brave hearts wish you well;
 For England's triumph means defeat.

* It is a waste of ink and energy to write "United States of America" always. All our property is marked US. Then why not Usland? And why should we always say American? The Canadian, the Mexican, the Brazilian, and so on, are as entirely entitled to the name "American" as we. Why not say Usman, as Frenchman, German, and so on?

THAT USSIAN OF USLAND

"I am an Ussian true," he said;
"Keep off the grass there, Mister Bull!
For if you don't, I'll bang your head
And bang your belly-full.

"Now mark, my burly jingo-man,
So prone to muss and fuss and cuss,
I am an Ussian, spick and span,
From out the land of Us!"

The stout man smole a frosty smile —
"An Ussian! Russian, Rusk, or Russ?"
"No, no! an Ussian, every while;
My land the land of Us."

"Aw! Usland, Outland? or, maybe,
Some Venezuela I'd forgot.
Hand out your map and let me see
Where Usland is, and what."

The Yankman leaned and spread his map
And shewed the land of Us and shewed,
Then eyed and eyed that paunchy chap,
And pulled his chin and chewed.

"What do you want?" A face grew red,
And red chop whiskers redder grew.
"I want the earth," the Ussian said,
"And all Alaska too.

"My stars swim up yon seas of blue;
No Shind am I, Boer, Turk or Russ.

I am an Ussian—Ussian true;
My land the land of Us.

"My triple North Star lights me on,
My Southern Cross leads ever thus;
My sun scarce sets till burst of dawn.
Hands off the land of Us!"

SAYS PLATO

Says Plato, "Once in Greece the gods
Plucked grapes, pressed wine, and reveled deep
And drowsed below their popy-pods,
And lay full length the hills asleep.
Then, waking, one said, 'Overmuch
We toil: come, let us rise and touch
Red clay, and shape it into man,
That he may build as we shall plan!'
And so they shaped man, all complete,
Self-procreative, satisfied;
Two heads, four hands, four feet.

"And then the gods slept, heedless, long;
But waking suddenly one day,
They heard their valley ring with song
And saw man reveling as they.
Enraged, they drew their swords and said,
'Bow down! bend down!'—but man replied
Defiant, fearless, everywhere
His four fists shaking in the air.
The gods descending cleft in twain
Each man; then wiped their swords on grapes;
And let confusion reign.

"And such confusion! each half ran,
Ran here, ran there; or weep or laugh
Or what he would, each helpless man
Ran hunting for his other half.
And from that day, thenceforth the grapes
Bore blood and flame, and restless shapes
Of hewn-down, helpless halves of men,
Ran searching ever; crazed, as when

First hewn in twain, they grasped, let go,
Then grasped again; but rarely found
That lost half once loved so."

Now, right or wrong, or false or true,
'Tis Plato's tale of bitter sweet;
But I know well and well know you
The quest keeps on at fever heat.
Let Love, then, wisely sit and wait!
The world is round; sit by the gate,
Like blind Belisarius: being blind,
Love should not search; Love shall not find
By searching. Brass is so like gold,
How shall this blind Love know new brass
From pure soft gold of old?

WELCOME TO THE GREAT AMERICAN OCEAN

Aloha! Wahwah! Quelle raison?
 Ship ahoy! What sails are these?
What tuneful Orpheus, what Jason
 Courts Colchis and her Golden Fleece?
For never since the oak-keeled Argo
Such sweet chords, such kingly cargo.*

Never since the mad Magellan
 Dared the Philippines and died,
Did these boundless billows swell in
 Such surprised and saucy pride.
Are they laughing, chaffing at you?
Waiting but to bang and bat you?

Doughty Vikings, dauntless Norsemen,
 White-maned stallions plunge and fret;
Ride them, ride them, daring horsemen,
 Ride or perish in.....the wet!
Galleons, doubloons galore
Paved of old this proud sea floor!

Carabellos, caballeros!
 Where your boasted Totus Munda?
Chile carne con tamales....
 And the bull-fight of a Sunday!

* A letter from Rio says there are more fiddles than guns on some of the great battleships, and that music is more in evidence than munitions of war. Amen! Amen! And may they all be as melodious and happy as Orpheus and Argus, although it is said Orpheus went to hell later on, soon after Jason's quest for the yellow wool.

That is all there is to say
Of all your yesterdays, to-day.

Heed my heroes, heed the story;
 Gone the argent galleon;
Gone the gold and gone the glory,
 Gone the gaudy, haughty Don.
His sword, his pride, sleep side by side,
Nor reck, at all, yond ebb or tide.

Ye who buckle on bright armor,
 Read and heed nor boast at all
Till ye have worn it warm and warmer,
 Fronting pride that runs to fall.
And heed, my heroes, where away
We all, a span of years today?

But welcome, walls of flame and thunder,
 Isles of steel and miles of launches!
Welcome to these seas of wonder,
 Men of war with olive branches;
Welcome to dear Crusoe's seas,
These sundown seas, this sun-born breeze.

Welcome to the oldest, newest!
 Here God's spirit moved upon
The waters, these the broadest, bluest,
 Ere that sudden burst of dawn
Dividing day from primal night,
When He said, "Let there be light."

But, beware the wild tornadoes!
 Entre nous, they are terrific!
Scout that dago's gay bravados!
 Cut that silly name, Pacific!

Balboa, wading to his knees,
Cried: "Lo, the calm, pacific seas!"

Straightway Cortez hewed his head off!
 Nay, blame not, accuse nor cavil.
Spite of all that has been said of
 He should have hewed it to the navel;
Aye, cut his neck off to his knees,
For naming these "Pacific Seas!"

Pacific? No, American!
 Her go, her get there, gown or gun!
Her British, "Get, and keep who can,"
 All places, races, rolled in one.
Pacific Ocean? Mild of motion?
Never such a silly notion!

So, beware the sometimes tidal
 Wave Tahitian, where bananas
Bathe; where fig-leafed parties bridal
 Dine in tree-tops on mananas!
Samoa's typhoons, too, beware—
Her mermaids combing kinky hair.

Aye, tidals, typhoons, 'clones beware!
 But when you touch sea-set Nippon,
Where lift three thousand isles mid-air,
 And each an Eden dear as dawn,
With dimpled Eves and dainty elves—
Why, then beware your bloomin' selves.

TWO WISE OLD MEN OF OMAR'S LAND

The world lay as a dream of love,
Lay drowned in beauty, drowsed in peace,
Lay filled with plenty, fat-increase,
Lay low-voiced as a wooing dove.
And yet, poor, blind man was not glad,
But to and fro, contentious, mad,
Rebellious, restless, hard he sought
And sought and sought—he scarce knew what.

The Persian monarch shook his head,
Slow twirled his twisted, raven beard,
As one who doubted, questioned, feared.
Then called his poet up and said:
"What aileth man, blind man, that he,
Stiff-necked and selfish, will not see
Yon gorgeous glories overhead,
These flowers climbing to the knee,
As climb sweet babes that loving cling
To hear a song?—Go forth and sing!"

The poet passed. He sang all day,
Sang all the year, sang many years;
He sang in joy, he sang in tears,
By desert way or watered way,
Yet all his singing was in vain.
Man would not list, man would not heed
Save but for lust and selfish greed
And selfish glory and hard gain.

And so at last the poet sang
In biting hunger and hard pain
No more, but tattered, bent and gray,
He hanged his harp and let it hang

Where keen winds walked with wintry rain,
High on a willow by the way,
The while he sought his king to cry
His failure forth and reason why.

The old king pulled his thin white beard,
Slow sipped his sherbet nervously,
Peered right and left, suspicious peered,
Thrummed with a foot as one who feared,
Then fixed his crown on close; then he
Clutched tight the wide arm of his throne,
And sat all sullen, sad and lone.

At last he savagely caught up
And drained, deep drained, his jeweled cup;
Then fierce he bade his poet say,
And briefly say, what of the day?
The trembling poet felt his head,
He felt his thin neck chokingly.
"Oh, king, this world is good to see!
Oh, king, this world is beautiful!"
The king's thin beard was white as wool,
The while he plucked it terribly,
Then suddenly and savage said:
"Cut that! cut that! or lose your head!"

The poet's knees smote knee to knee,
The poet's face was pitiful.
"Have mercy, king! hear me, hear me!
This gorgeous world is beautiful,
This beauteous world is good to see;
But man, poor man, he has not time
To see one thing at all, save one—"

"Haste, haste, dull poet, and have done
With all such feeble, foolish rime!
No time? Bah! man, no bit of time
To see but one thing? Well, that one?"
"That one, oh, king, that one fair thing
Of all fair things on earth to see,
Oh, king, oh, wise and mighty king,
That takes man's time continually,
That takes man's time and drinks it up
As you have drained your jeweled cup—
Is woman, woman, wilful, fair—
Just woman, woman, everywhere!"

The king scarce knew what next to do;
He did not like that ugly truth;
For, far back in his sunny youth,
He, too, had loved a goodly few.
He punched a button, punched it twice,
Then as he wiped his beard he said:
"Oh, threadbare bard of foolish rime,
If man looks all his time at her,
Sees naught but her, pray tell me, sir,
Why, how does woman spend her time?"

The singer is a simple bird,
The simplest ever seen or heard.
It will not lie, it knows no thing
Save but to sing and truly sing.
The poet reached his neck, his head,
As if to lay it on the shelf
And quit the hard and hapless trade
Of simple truth and homely rime
That brought him neither peace nor pelf;
Then with his last, faint gasp he said:
"Why, woman, woman, matron, maid,

She puts in all her precious time
In looking, looking at herself!"

A silence then was heard to fall
So hard it broke into a grin!
The old king thought a space and thought
Of when her face was all in all—
When love was scarce a wasteful sin,
And even kingdoms were as naught.
At last he laughed, and in a trice
He banged the button, banged it thrice,
Then clutched his poet's hand and then
These two white-bearded, wise old men
They sat that throne and chinned and chinned,
And grinned, they did, and grinned and grinned!

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